THE

# OBSERVER:

BEING A COLLECTION OF

## MORAL, LITERARY AND FAMILIAR

## ESSAYS.

——MULTORUM PROVIDUS URBES
ET MORES HOMINUM INSPEXIT—— (HORAT.)

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By *RICHARD CUMBERLAND*, Esq.

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THE FIFTH EDITION, NEWLY ARRANGED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ENTIRE TRANSLATION OF THE COMEDY OF THE CLOUDS.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOL. VI.

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*LONDON:*
Printed for C. DILLY, in the Poultry.

1798.

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626

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THE

# OBSERVER.

## No. CXLII.

I SHALL now reſume the plan I have purſued in the foregoing numbers, and proceed with my review of the writers of the Greek ſtage.

In No. CXLI. I took leave of what is properly called *The Old Comedy*; I am next to ſpeak of that claſs of authors, who are generally ſtiled writers of *The Middle Comedy*.

The ſpirit of a free people will diſcover itſelf in the productions of their ſtage; the comic drama, being a profeſſed repreſentation of living manners, will paint theſe likeneſſes in ſtronger or in fainter colours, according to the degree of licence or reſtraint

which may prevail in different places, or in the ſame place at different periods. We are now upon that particular æra in the Athenian conſtitution, when it began to feel ſuch a degree of controul under the riſing power of the Macedonian princes, as put a ſtop to the perſonal licentiouſneſs of the comic poets: If we are to conſider Athens only as the capital ſeat of genius, we muſt bewail this declenſion from her former ſtate of freedom, which had produced ſo brilliant a period in the annals of her literature; but ſpeak of her in a political ſenſe, and it muſt be acknowledged that whatever reſtraints were put upon her liberty, and however humbling the diſgraces were which ſhe incurred, they could not well be more than ſhe merited by her notorious abuſe of public proſperity, and moſt ingrateful treatment of her beſt and moſt deſerving citizens. When the thunder of oratory was ſilenced, the flaſhes of wit were no longer diſplayed; death ſtopped the impetuous tongue of Demoſthenes, and the hand of power controuled the acrimonious muſe of Ariſtophanes; obedient to the rein, the poet checked his career of perſonality, and compoſed his *Æoli-*

*ſicon*

*ſicon* upon the plan of what we now denominate the *Middle Comedy*. Cratinus alſo, though the bittereſt of all the old writers, began to ſweeten his gall, and, conforming to the neceſſity of the times, condeſcended to take up with the reſource of parody, and wrote his *Ulyſſes* upon the ſame ſyſtem of reform; no longer permitted to vent his ſatire upon living characters, he took poſt on the boldeſt ground that was left for him to ſtand on, and opened his attack upon the dead by ridiculing the immortal Odyſſey of Homer. The chorus was now withdrawn, and the poet no longer ſpoke his own ſentiments or harangued his audience by proxy; parody is ſatire of ſo inferior a ſpecies, that if comedy did not very ſenſibly decline in it's middle æra (which there is no reaſon to think was the caſe), it muſt have been upheld by a very ſtrong exertion of talents, or by collateral reſources of a better ſtamp than this which we are ſpeaking of. Some, who are ranked in the old claſs of comic writers, continued to compoſe for the ſtage, as we have already inſtanced; it may well be preſumed that they at leaſt drooped the wing, and flagged under the preſſure of unexperienced

reſtraints; but if I may form a conjecture of the comparative ſpirit and excellence of the *Middle Comedy* from the ſamples and fragments of thoſe dramatiſts, who properly and excluſively belong to it, I find nothing which diſpoſes me to ſuſpect that it had in the leaſt declined from the merit of the firſt writers, but on the contrary ſhould conceive, that it advanced in perfection no leſs than it did in time by the revolution which took place.

I ſhall now produce ſome ſpecimens of the comedies, which fall under this claſs, and ſuch accounts as I have been able to collect of their authors, whom I have ranged alphabetically; the firſt therefore, which I ſhall ſpeak of, will be the poet Alexis.

## ALEXIS.

This poet was a native of Thurium in Magna Græcia, a town celebrated for being the birth-place of Herodotus; he was great uncle by the father's ſide to Menander, and was the firſt to diſcover and encourage the early genius of that admired writer. Alexis lived to a great age, and we have the autho-

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rity of Plutarch for ſaying, that the vigour of his faculties was preſerved to the laſt: "The comic poets Alexis and Philemon," ſays that author, "continued to write for "the ſtage to the lateſt period of their lives, "and when death at length ſurpriſed them, "he found them crowned with the trophies "of ſucceſs, and triumphing in the plaudits "of the theatre." The numerous productions of our poet confirm this aſſertion of Plutarch, for Suidas ſays he was author of no leſs than two hundred and forty-five dramas, and I find the titles of one hundred and thirteen of this collection even now upon record; this proves that he poſſeſſed a very copious vein of invention, and the fragments, which remain out of the general wreck of his works, indicate the richneſs as well as copiouſneſs of that vein. The works of ſuch a maſter were of themſelves a ſtudy, and as Menander formed himſelf upon his inſtructions, we cannot fail to conceive very highly of the preceptor from the acknowledged excellence of the pupil. I diſcover a comedy of Alexis intitled *Adelphi*; it is generally ſuppoſed that Terence copied his comedy of that name from Menander,

but unleſs his commentators have given ſome better reaſon, than I have yet met with, for the fact, it will bear a doubt at leaſt whether that elegant copy may not have been as much indebted to the uncle as to the nephew, for the charms of it's dialogue and the delicacy of it's character.

Agellius informs us that Alexis formed the plot of one of his comedies upon the life and actions of Pythagoras; poſterity will give him credit for his choice, as we cannot conceive a happier fable for an ingenious author to work upon, nor any that would afford a more fruitful field for facetious raillery than the extravagant and juggling tricks and contrivances, which that impoſtor's ſtory teems with. Amongſt his fragments I diſcover one little ſcrap, which, though a very ſmall one, ſeems to have been a ſplinter of the wreck, wherein he ridicules a certain gluttonous Pythagorean, named Epicharides, for evading the abſtemious rule of his ſect for eating nothing that has life, by ſwearing that his meat is killed before it is cooked; there can be no doubt but the tenour of the piece was altogether ſatirical, for it cannot be ſuppoſed that the ſame man, who lampooned

pooned Plato, would ſpare Pythagoras; and that he did treat Plato in this contemptuous ſtrain we have the word of Laertius, who refers to no leſs than four of his comedies, in which he ridicules him very ſeverely; there is one ſhort paſſage ſtill remaining, which conveys a ſneer at this philoſopher, and ſo far as it goes confirms the anecdote, which Laertius gives us; but the biographer does more than the admirers of the divine Plato will thank him for, when he informs us of the grace and comelineſs of Alexis's perſon, and of Plato's partiality to him on that account; and amongſt many other gallantries of the like nature, we find ſome verſes addreſſed to Alexis, in praiſe of his beauty, by the enamoured philoſopher, whoſe muſe ſeems to have viſited him pretty frequently on theſe occaſions: There is no great point in his love-epigram to Alexis, but in that to a certain young man named Stella, who was his fellow-ſtudent in aſtrology, he ſeems to have been as extravagant in imagination, as Juliet's *concetto* of cutting Romeo *into little ſtars*, for I queſtion if the whole ſchool of Epicurus can furniſh a more ridiculous

ſtart of rhapſodical bombaſt than the following—

" Oh! that I were that heaven on which you gaze,
" To dart upon thee with a thouſand rays!"

What a plunge is this for Pegaſus to make with a grave philoſopher on his back! Whether it was ſucceſsful or not with the young ſtar-gazer I am not curious to enquire; if he was in the humour to be tickled with nonſenſe, I ſhould think ſuch an addreſs muſt have been irreſiſtibly charming; but we may be very ſure that Alexis was not ſo complying, and that, inſtead of being pleaſed with the flattery, he turned the flatterer into ridicule upon all occaſions, firſt in his *Meropis*, again in his *Ancylion*, his *Olympiodorus*, and moſt of all in his celebrated comedy intitled *The Paraſite*. Ariſtotle records an anſwer made by Alexis to an inquiſitive fellow, who obſerved him in his latter years ſlowly crawling along the ſtreets of Athens, and demanded *what he was doing*—*Nothing*; replied the feeble veteran, *and of that very diſeaſe I am dying*.—Stobæus has the ſame anecdote, and I think it unlikely for a man, who preſerved

ſo

ſo vigorous a mind, as Plutarch ſays he did, to extreme old age, to be what Athenæus calls him, Ὀψοφάγος, a glutton; I conclude therefore that the Deipnoſophiſt was in the miſtake of Congreve's Jeremy, who ſuſpected Epictetus was a real cook, whereas he only wrote receipts. I have one of theſe now before me from the pen of Alexis, which does not ſeem to ſpeak of the Epicurean *ſummum bonum* with all that reſpect and approbation, which a glutton would naturally profeſs for it—This it is—

"I ſigh'd for eaſe, and, weary of my lot,
"Wiſh'd to exchange it: In this mood I ſtroll'd
"Up to the citadel three ſeveral days;
"And there I found a bevy of preceptors
"For my new ſyſtem, thirty in a group;
"All with one voice prepar'd to tutor me—
"Eat, drink and revel in the joys of love!
"For pleaſure is the wiſe man's ſovereign good."

I think it will alſo bear a doubt, whether a voluptuary could find in his heart to vent ſuch irony as the following, againſt the great ſupporters of his ſyſtem, harlots and procureſſes; I confeſs it ſhews Alexis to have been deep in the ſecrets of their vocation, but a libertine in practice would be branded

for a traitor, if he was to tell ſuch tales of the academy he belonged to—He is ſpeaking of the commodious ſiſterhood of procureſſes—

" They fly at all, and, as their funds encreaſe,
" With freſh recruits they ſtill augment their ſtock,
" Moulding the young novitiate to her trade;
" Form, feature, manners, every thing ſo chang'd,
" That not a trace of former ſelf is left.
" Is the wench ſhort? a triple ſole of cork
" Exalts the pigmy to a proper ſize.
" Is ſhe too tall of ſtature? a low chair
" Softens the fault, and a fine eaſy ſtoop
" Lowers her to ſtandard-pitch—If narrow-hipt,
" A handſome wadding readily ſupplies
" What nature ſtints, and all beholders cry,
" See what plump haunches!—Hath the nymph
" perchance
" A high round paunch, ſtuft like our comic drolls,
" And ſtrutting out foreright? a good ſtout buſk
" Puſhing athwart ſhall force the intruder back.
" Hath ſhe red brows? a little ſoot will cure 'em.
" Is ſhe too black? the ceruſe makes her fair:
" Too pale of hue? the opal comes in aid.
" Hath ſhe a beauty out of ſight? Diſcloſe it!
" Strip nature bare without a bluſh—Fine teeth?
" Let her affect one everlaſting grin,
" Laugh without ſtint—But ah! if laugh ſhe cannot,
" And her lips won't obey, take a fine twig
" Of myrtle, ſhape it like a butcher's ſkewer,
" And prop them open, ſet her on the bitt

" Day

" Day after day when out of ſight, till uſe
" Grows ſecond nature, and the pearly row,
" Will ſhe or will ſhe not, perforce appears."

This paſſage I have literally rendered, and I ſuſpect it deſcribes the artifices of an impure toilet, with preciſion enough to ſhew that theſe Grecian models are not abſolutely antiquated by the intervention of ſo many centuries. Our modern puffers in perfumery may have carried artificial complexions and Circaſſian bloom to a higher ſtate of perfection; I dare ſay they have more elaborate means of ſtaining carrotty eye-brows than with ſimple ſoot, and cannot think of comparing a little harmleſs opal with their poiſonous farrago of paſtes, pomatums and pearl powders; but I would have my fair and virtuous countrywomen take notice, that the ſubſtitution of ſtuft hips originated with the Athenian proſtitutes, with this advantage on the ſide of good ſenſe, that the inventors of the faſhion never applied falſe bottoms to thoſe, whom Nature had provided with true ones; they ſeem to have had a better eye for due proportion than to add to a redundancy, becauſe in ſome caſes it was convenient to fill up a vacuum.

As I addreſs this friendly hint to the plumper part of the fair ſex, I ſhall rely upon the old proverb for their good-humour, and hope they will kindly interpret it as a proof that my eye is ſometimes directed to objects, which their's cannot ſuperintend; and as they generally agree to keep certain particulars out of ſight, a real friend to decency will wiſh they would conſent to keep them a little more out of mind alſo.

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## No. CXLIII.

WE are indebted to Vitruvius for a quotation in the beginning of his Sixth Book, taken from one of the dramas of Alexis, to the following effect—— "Whereas all the other ſtates of Greece "compel the children of deſtitute parents, "without exception, to provide for the ſup-"port of them who begot them, we of "Athens," ſays the poet, "make the law "binding upon ſuch children only, who "are beholden to their parents for the "bleſſing

" bleſſing of a liberal education."—The proviſo was certainly a wiſe one, and it is with juſtice that the poet gives his countrymen credit for being the authors of it.

Alexis in one of his comedies very appoſitely remarks—" that the nature of man in " ſome reſpects reſembles that of wine, for " as fermentation is neceſſary to new wine, " ſo is it alſo to a youthful ſpirit; when that " proceſs is over and it comes to ſettle and " ſubſide, we may then and not till then " expect to find a permanent tranquillity." This alluſion he again takes up, probably in the ſame ſcene, though under a different character, and cries out—" I am now far " advanced in the evening of life's day, " and what is there in the nature of man, " that I ſhould liken it to that of wine, " ſeeing that old age, which recommends " the latter, mars the former? Old wine " indeed exhilarates, but old men are mi- " ſerable to themſelves and others." Antiphanes the comic poet has ſtruck upon the ſame compariſon, but with a different turn— " Old age and old wine," ſays he, " may well " be compared; let either of them exceed

their date ever ſo little, and the whole "turns four."

Julius Pollux ſays that Alexis named one of his comedies Γυναικοστρατία, and there are ſome paſſages, which we may preſume are reliques of this piece, of a very bitter caſt, for he makes one of his female characters roundly aſſert—

"No animal in nature can compare
"In impudence with woman; I myſelf
"Am one, and from my own experience ſpeak."

I flatter myſelf an Engliſh audience would not hear ſuch calumny; the modern ſtage encourages more reſpectful ſentiments—

*Oh! woman, lovely woman! nature made thee*
*To temper man; we had been brutes without thee.*

Our poet muſt have been in an ill-humour with the ſex, when he wrote this comedy, or elſe the Athenian wives muſt have been mere Xantippes to deſerve what follows—

"Nor houſe, nor coffers, nor whatever elſe
"Is dear and precious, ſhould be watch'd ſo cloſely,
"As ſhe whom you call wife. Sad lot is our's,
"Who barter life and all its free delights,
"To be the ſlaves of woman, and are paid

"Her

" Her bridal portion in the luckleſs coin
" Of ſorrow and vexation. A man's wrath
" Is milk and honey to a woman's rage;
" He can be much offended and forgive,
" She never pardons thoſe ſhe moſt offends:
" What ſhe ſhould do ſhe ſlights, what ſhe ſhould not
" Hotly purſues; falſe to each virtuous point,
" And only in her wickedneſs ſincere."

" Who but a lunatic would wed and be
" Wilfully wretched? better to endure
" The ſhame of poverty, and all it's taunts
" Rather than this. The reprobate, on whom
" The Cenſor ſet his brand, is juſtly doom'd
" Unfit to govern others, but the wretch,
" Who weds, no longer can command himſelf,
" Nor hath his woe a period but in death."

So much for matrimony, according to our author's picture of it! he has left us a deſcription of love, which he has ſketched in more pleaſing colours—

" The man, who holds true pleaſure to conſiſt
" In pampering his vile body, and defies
" Love's great divinity, raſhly maintains
" Weak impious war with an immortal God.
" The graveſt maſter that the ſchools can boaſt
" Ne'er train'd his pupils to ſuch diſcipline,
" As love his votaries, unrivall'd power,
" The firſt great deity—and where is he,
" So ſtubborn and determinedly ſtiff,
" But ſhall at ſome time bend the knee to love,
" And make obeiſance to his mighty ſhrine?"

" One

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" The firſt great deity—and where is he,
" So ſtubborn and determinedly ſtiff,
" But ſhall at ſome time bend the knee to love,
" And make obeiſance to his mighty ſhrine?"

" One

" One day as ſlowly ſauntering from the port,
" A thouſand cares conflicting in my breaſt,
" Thus I began to commune with myſelf—
" Methinks theſe painters miſapply their art,
" And never knew the being which they draw;
" For mark! their many falſe conceits of love.
" Love is nor male nor female, man nor god,
" Nor with intelligence nor yet without it,
" But a ſtrange compound of all theſe, uniting
" In one mixt eſſence many oppoſites;
" A manly courage with a woman's fear,
" The madman's phrenſy in a reaſoning mind,
" The ſtrength of ſteel, the fury of a beaſt,
" The ambition of a hero—ſomething 'tis,
" But by Minerva and the gods I ſwear!
" I know not what this nameleſs ſomething is."

This riddling deſcription of love I conſider as a very curious fragment of the Greek comedy, as it has more play of words and leſs ſimplicity of thought and ſtile, than I can recollect in any writer of this age and country. In general I think I can diſcover more antitheſis in the authors of the Middle Comedy than in any others, and I take it to have been one of the conſequences of parody. Phædria's picture of love in the opening ſcene of Terence's Eunuch, is ſomething in the ſtile of this fragment of Alexis, and the particular expreſſion of—*ut cum ratione inſanias*

*inſanias*—ſeems of a piece with—Ἡ ἄνοια μανίας, ὁ δὲ λόγος φρονῆντος. Which I have rendered—

" A madman's phrenſy in a reaſoning mind."

Our Shakeſpear is ſtill cloſer to it, when Romeo deſcribing love calls it

*A madneſs moſt diſcreet.*

And again—

*Why then, O brawling Love! O loving Hate!*
*Oh! any thing of nothing firſt create;*
*Oh, heavy Lightneſs! ſerious Vanity!*
*Miſhapen chaos of well-ſeeming forms!*
*Still-waking ſleep, that is not what it is.*

Before I take leave of Alexis I ſhall ſubjoin one more paſſage from his remains, which conveys the ſtrongeſt marks of deteſtation, that language can ſupply, of that very vice, which Athenæus would perſuade us he was addicted to; but I will never be perſuaded that a glutton wrote the following lines in the face of his own example, nor would it be an eaſy matter to convince me, that if any glutton had the will, he would poſſeſs the wit, to write them.

" You, Sir, a Cyrenean as I take you,
" Look at your ſect of deſperate voluptuaries;
" There's

" There's Diodorus—beggary is too good for him—
" A vaſt inheritance in two ſhort years,
" Where is it? Squander'd, vaniſh'd, gone for ever:
" So rapid was his diſſipation.——Stop!
" Stop, my good friend, you cry; not quite ſo faſt!
" This man went fair and ſoftly to his ruin;
" What talk you of two years? As many days,
" Two little days were long enough to finiſh
" Young Epicharides; he had ſome ſoul,
" And drove a merry pace to his undoing—
" Marry! if a kind ſurfeit wou'd ſurpriſe us,
" Ere we ſit down to earn it, ſuch prevention
" Wou'd come moſt opportune to ſave the trouble
" Of a ſick ſtomach and an aching head:
" But whilſt the puniſhment is out of ſight,
" And the full chalice at our lips, we drink,
" Drink all to-day, to-morrow faſt and mourn,
" Sick, and all o'er oppreſt with nauſeous fumes;
" Such is the drunkard's curſe, and Hell itſelf
" Cannot deviſe a greater—Oh that nature
" Might quit us of this overbearing burthen,
" This tyrant-god, the belly! take that from us,
" With all it's beſtial appetites, and man,
" Exonerated man, ſhall be all ſoul."

## ANTIPHANES.

Antiphanes of Smyrna, or, as ſome will have it, of Rhodes, was born in or about Olymp. XCIII.: His father's name was Demophanes, and his mother's Œnoe, people of ſervile degree; yet our poet, thus ignoble

ignoble in his birth, lived to ſignalize himſelf by his genius, and was held in ſuch reſpect by his Athenian patrons, that a public decree was made for the removal of his remains from the iſle of Chios, where he died at the age of ſeventy-four, and for depoſiting them in the city of Athens, where his funeral honours were ſumptuouſly performed at the charge of the ſtate.

Various accounts are given of the number of his comedies, but of all the Greek dramatiſts he appears to have been the moſt prolifick, for the loweſt liſt of his plays amounts to two hundred and ninety, and ſome contend that he actually compoſed three hundred and ſixty-five, a number almoſt incredible if we had not the inſtances of Calderon and De Vega, too well authenticated to admit of a doubt in modern times to refer to. Antiphanes bore off the prize with thirty comedies; and if theſe ſucceſſes appear diſproportioned to his attempts, yet they were brilliant, inaſmuch as he had to contend with ſuch reſpectable rivals. We have now no other rule, whereby to meaſure his merit, but in the ſeveral fragments ſelected from his comedies by various authors of the lower

lower ages, and theſe, though tolerably numerous, will ſcarce ſuffice to give ſuch an inſight into the original, as may enable us to pronounce upon it's comparative excellence with any critical preciſion: True it is, even theſe ſmall reliques have agitated the curioſity of the learned moderns, to whom ſo many valuable authors are loſt, but we cannot contemplate them without a ſenſible regret to find how few amongſt them compriſe any ſuch portion of the dialogue, as to open the character, ſtile and manners of the writer, and not often enough to furniſh a conjecture at the fable they appertain to; they are like ſmall crevices, letting in one feeble ray of light into a capacious building; they dart occaſionally upon ſome rich and noble part, but they cannot convey to us a full and perfect idea of the ſymmetry and conſtruction of the majeſtic whole.

I have the titles of one hundred and four comedies under the name of this author.

## No. CXLIV.

WHEN I find the Middle Comedy abounding with invectives againſt women, I am tempted to think it was the æra of bad wives. Antiphanes wrote two plays of a ſatirical caſt, one intitled *Matrimony*, and the other *The Nuptials*; we may venture to gueſs that the following paſſages have belonged to one or both of theſe plays—

" Ye fooliſh huſbands, trick not out your wives;
" Dreſs not their perſons fine, but cloath their minds.
" Tell 'em your ſecrets?—Tell 'em to the crier,
" And make the market-place your confidante!"—
" Nay, but there's proper penalties for blabbing."—
" What penalties! they'll drive you out of them;
" Summon your children into court, convene
" Relations, friends, and neighbours to confront
" And nonſuit your complaint, till in the end
" Juſtice is hooted down, and guilt prevails."

The ſecond is in a more animated ſtrain of comedy.

" For this, and only this, I'll truſt a woman,
" That if you take life from her ſhe will die,
" And being dead ſhe'li come to life no more;
" In all things elſe I am an infidel.

" Oh!

" Oh! might I never more behold a woman!
" Rather than I ſhould meet that object, Gods!
" Strike out my eyes—I'll thank you for your mercy."

We are indebted to Athenæus for part of a dialogue, in which Antiphanes has introduced a traveller to relate a whimſical contrivance, which the king of Cyprus had made uſe of for cooling the air of his banquetting-chamber, whilſt he ſate at ſupper.

" *A.* You ſay you've paſs'd much of your time in
" Cyprus.
" *B.* All; for the war prevented my departure.
" *A.* In what place chiefly, may I aſk?
" *B.* In Paphos;
" Where I ſaw elegance in ſuch perfection,
" As almoſt mocks belief.
" *A.* Of what kind, pray you?
" *B.* Take this for one—The monarch, when he
" ſups,
" Is fann'd by living doves.
" *A.* You make me curious
" How this is to be done; all other queſtions
" I will put by to be reſolv'd in this.
" *B.* There is a juice drawn from the Carpin tree,
" To which your dove inſtinctively is wedded
" With a moſt loving appetite; with this
" The king anoints his temples, and the odour
" No ſooner captivates the ſilly birds,
" Than ſtraight they flutter round him, nay, would fly
" A bolder pitch, ſo ſtrong a love-charm draws them,
" And

" And perch, O horror! on his ſacred crown,
" If that ſuch prophanation were permitted
" Of the bye-ſtanders, who with reverend care
" Fright them away, till thus, retreating now
" And now advancing, they keep ſuch a coil
" With their broad vans, and beat the lazy air
" Into ſo quick a ſtir, that in the conflict
" His royal lungs are comfortably cool'd,
" And thus he ſups as Paphian monarchs ſhould."

An old man in the comedy, as it ſhould ſeem, of the Γηρατάδης, reaſons thus—

" I grant you that an old fellow like my-
" ſelf, if he be a wiſe fellow withal, one that
" has ſeen much and learnt a great deal, may
" be good for ſomething and keep a ſhop
" open for all cuſtomers, who want advice
" in points of difficulty. Age is as it were
" an altar of refuge for human diſtreſſes to
" fly to. Oh! longevity, coveted by all
" who are advancing towards thee, curſed
" by all who have attained thee; railed at
" by the wiſe, betrayed by them who conſult
" thee, and well ſpoken of by no one.—
" And yet what is it we old fellows can be
" charged with? We are no ſpendthrifts,
" do not conſume our means in gluttony, run
" mad for a wench, or break locks to get at
" her; and why then may not old age, ſee-
" ing

" ing ſuch diſcretion belongs to it, be al-
" lowed it's pretenſions to happineſs?"

A ſervant thus rallies his maſter upon a ſpecies of hypocriſy natural to old age.

" Ah! good my maſter, you may ſigh for death,
" And call amain upon him to releaſe you,
" But will you bid him welcome when he comes?
" Not you. Old Charon has a ſtubborn taſk
" To tug you to his wherry and diſlodge you
" From your rich tables, when your hour is come:
" I muſe the Gods ſend not a plague amongſt you,
" A good, briſk, ſweeping, epidemic plague:
" There's nothing elſe can make you all immortal."

Surely there is good comedy in this raillery of the ſervant—The following ſhort paſſages have a very neat turn of expreſſion in the original.

" An honeſt man to law makes no reſort;
" His conſcience is the better rule of court."

" The man, who firſt laid down the pedant rule,
" That love is folly, was himſelf the fool:
" For if to life that tranſport you deny,
" What privilege is left us—but to die?"

" Ceaſe, mourners, ceaſe complaint, and weep no
" more!
" Your loſt friends are not dead, but gone before,
" Advanc'd a ſtage or two upon that road,
" Which you muſt travel in the ſteps they trode;

" In

" In the ſame inn we all ſhall meet at laſt,
" There take new life and laugh at ſorrows paſt."

When I meet theſe and many other familiar ſentiments, which theſe deſigners after nature abound in, I aſk myſelf where originality is to be ſought for; not with theſe poets it is clear, for their ſickles are for ever in each other's corn; nor even with the founders of the Greek drama, for they all leant upon Homer, as he perhaps on others antecedent to his æra. As for the earlieſt writers of our own ſtage, the little I have read of their rude beginnings ſeems to be a dull maſs of ſecond-hand pedantry coarſely daubed with ribaldry: In Shakeſpear you meet originality of the pureſt caſt, a new creation, bright and beaming with unrivalled luſtre; his contemporary Jonſon did not ſeem to aim at it.

Though I have already given a Paraſite from Eupolis, and compared him with Jonſon's admirable Moſca, yet I cannot refuſe admiſſion to a very pleaſant, impudent fellow, who gives name to a comedy of Antiphanes, and in the following ſpirited apology for his life and actions, takes upon him the office of being his own hiſtorian.

" What art, vocation, trade or myſtery
" Can match with your fine Paraſite?—The Painter?
" He! a mere dauber: A vile drudge the Farmer:
" Their buſineſs is to labour, our's to laugh,
" To jeer, to quibble, faith Sirs! and to drink,
" Aye, and drink luſtily. Is not this rare?
" Tis life, my life at leaſt: The firſt of pleaſures
" Were to be rich myſelf, but next to this
" I hold it beſt to be a Paraſite,
" And feed upon the rich. Now mark me right!
" Set down my virtues one by one: Imprimis,
" Good-will to all men—Would they were all rich
" So might I gull them all: Malice to none;
" I envy no man's fortune, all I wiſh
" Is but to ſhare it: Would you have a friend,
" A gallant, ſteady friend? I am your man:
" No ſtriker I, no ſwaggerer, no defamer,
" But one to bear all theſe and ſtill forbear:
" If you inſult, I laugh, unruffled, merry,
" Invincibly good-humour'd ſtill I laugh:
" A ſtout good ſoldier I, valorous to a fault,
" When once my ſtomach's up and ſupper ſerv'd:
" You know my humour, not one ſpark of pride,
" Such and the ſame for ever to my friends:
" If cudgell'd, molten iron to the hammer
" Is not ſo malleable; but if I cudgel,
" Bold as the thunder: Is one to be blinded?
" I am the lightning's flaſh: to be puff'd up,
" I am the wind to blow him to the burſting:
" Choak'd, ſtrangled?—I can do't and ſave a halter:
" Would you break down his doors? Behold an earth-
" quake:
" Open and enter them?—A battering-ram:

" Will

" Will you ſit down to ſupper? I'm your gueſt,
" Your very *Fly* to enter without bidding:
" Would you move off? You'll move a well as ſoon:
" I'm for all work, and tho' the job were ſtabbing,
" Betraying, falſe-accuſing, only ſay
" Do this, and it is done! I ſtick at nothing;
" They call me Thunder-bolt for my diſpatch;
" Friend of my friends am I: Let actions ſpeak me;
" I'm much too modeſt to commend myſelf."

I muſt conſider this fragment as a very ſtriking ſpecimen of the author, and the only licence I have uſed is to tack together two ſeparate extracts from the ſame original, which meet in the break of the tenth line, and ſo appoſitely that it is highly probable they both belong to the ſame ſpeech; more than probable to the ſame comedy and character. Lucian's Paraſite ſeems much beholden to this of Antiphanes.

Antiphanes was on a certain occaſion commanded to read one of his comedies in the preſence of Alexander the Great; he had the mortification to find that the play did not pleaſe the royal critic; the moment was painful, but the poet, addreſſing the monarch as follows, ingeniouſly contrived to vindicate his own production, at the ſame time he was paſſing a courtly compliment to the

prince, at whoſe command he read it— "I "cannot wonder, O king! that you diſap- "prove of my comedy; for he, who could be "entertained by it, muſt have been preſent "at the ſcenes it repreſents; he muſt be ac- "quainted with the vulgar humours of our "public ordinaries, have been familiar with "the impure manners of our courteſans, a "party in the beating-up of many a brothel, "and a ſufferer as well as an actor in thoſe un- "ſeemly frays and riots: Of all theſe things, "you, Great Sir! are not informed, and the "fault lies more in my preſumption for in- "truding them upon your hearing, than in "any want of fidelity with which I have "deſcribed them."

## No. CXLV.

## ANAXANDRIDES.

ANAXANDRIDES of Rhodes, ſon of Anax- ander, was author of ſixty-five come- dies, with ten of which he bore away the prizes from his competitors. Nature beſtowed upon this poet not only a fine genius, but a moſt

a moſt beautiful perſon; his ſtature was of the talleſt, his air elegant and engaging, and, whilſt he affected an effeminate delicacy in his habit and appearance, he was a victim to the moſt violent and uncontroulable paſſions, which, whenever he was diſappointed of the prize he contended for, were vented upon every perſon and thing that fell in his way, not excepting even his own unfortunate dramas, which he would tear in pieces and ſcatter amongſt the mob, or at other times devote them to the moſt ignominious uſes he could deviſe: Of theſe he would preſerve no copy, and thus it came to paſs that many admirable comedies were actually deſtroyed and loſt to poſterity. His dreſs was ſplendid and extravagant in the extreme, being of the fineſt purple richly fringed with gold, and his hair was not coiled up in the Athenian faſhion, but ſuffered to fall over his ſhoulders at it's full length: His muſe was no leſs wanton and voluptuous than his manners, for it is recorded of him, that he was the firſt comic poet, who ventured to introduce upon the ſcene incidents of the groſſeſt intrigue: He was not only ſevere upon Plato and the Academy, but attacked the magiſtracy of

Athens, charging them with the depravity of their lives in ſo daring and contemptuous a ſtile, that they brought him to trial, and by one of the moſt cruel ſentences upon record, condemned the unhappy poet to be ſtarved to death.

Zarottus and ſome other commentators upon Ovid interpret that diſtich in his *Ibis* to allude to Anaxandrides, where he ſays, ver. 525-6.

*Utve parum ſtabili qui carmine læſit Athenas,*
*Inviſus pereas deficiente cibo.*

"Or meet the libeller's unpitied fate,
"Starv'd for traducing the Athenian ſtate."

I know this interpretation of Zarottus is controverted upon the authority of Pauſanias, and Ovid is ſuppoſed by ſome to point at Mævius, by others at Hipponax; but as the name of the ſufferer is not given, thoſe, who incline to the conſtruction of Euſtathius as well as Zarottus, will apply it to our author.

Of the titles of his comedies eight and twenty remain, but for his fragments, which are few in number, I diſcover none which ſeem to merit a tranſlation; had he ſpared thoſe

thoſe which his paſſion deſtroyed, happy chance might perhaps have reſcued ſomething worth our notice.

## ARISTOPHON.

This poet has left us more and better remembrancers of his muſe, though fewer of his hiſtory: That he was a writer of the Middle Comedy is all I can collect, which perſonally concerns him: The titles of four of his comedies are in my hands, but though Plutarch, Athenæus, Laertius in his Pythagoras, Stobæus and Gyraldus all make mention of his name, none of them have given us any anecdotes of his hiſtory.

Love and matrimony, which are ſubjects little touched upon by the writers of the Old Comedy, became important perſonages in the Middle Drama; the former ſeems to have opened a very flowery field to fancy, the laſt appears generally to have been ſet up as the butt of ridicule and invective.—Our author for inſtance tells us—

" A man may marry once without a crime,
" But curſt is he, who weds a ſecond time."

On the topic of love he is more playful and ingenious—

" Love, the diſturber of the peace of heaven,
" And grand fomenter of Olympian feuds,
" Was baniſh'd from the ſynod of the Gods:
" They drove him down to earth at the expence
" Of us poor mortals, and curtail'd his wings
" To ſpoil his ſoaring and ſecure themſelves
" From his annoyance—Selfiſh, hard decree!
" For ever ſince he roams th' unquiet world,
" The tyrant and deſpoiler of mankind."

There is a fragment of his comedy of the *Pythagoriſta*, in which he ridicules that philopher's pretended viſit to the regions of the dead—

" I've heard this arrogant impoſtor tell,
" Amongſt the wonders which he ſaw in hell,
" That Pluto with his ſcholars ſate and fed,
" Singling them out from the inferior dead:
" Good faith! the monarch was not over-nice,
" Thus to take up with beggary and lice."

In another paſſage of the ſame ſatirical comedy he thus humorouſly deſcribes the diſciples of Pythagoras—

" So gaunt they ſeem, that famine never made
" Of lank Philippides ſo mere a ſhade;
" Of ſalted tunny-fiſh their ſcanty dole,
" Their beverage, like the frog's, a ſtanding pool,

" With

" With now and then a cabbage, at the beſt
" The leavings of the caterpillar's feaſt:
" No comb approaches their diſhevell'd hair
" To rout the long-eſtabliſh'd myriads there;
" On the bare ground their bed, nor do they know
" A warmer coverlid than ſerves the crow;
" Flames the meridian ſun without a cloud?
" They baſk like graſshoppers and chirp as loud:
" With oil they never even feaſt their eyes;
" The luxury of ſtockings they depiſe,
" But bare-foot as the crane ſtill march along
" All night in chorus with the ſcreech-owl's ſong."

Of AXIONICUS the comic poet I have nothing to relate, but that he was a writer of reputation in the period we are deſcribing, and that we have the titles of ſix of his comedies, with a ſmall parcel of unintereſting fragments, chiefly to be found in Athenæus.

BATHON I muſt alſo paſs over like the former, no records of his hiſtory, and only a few fragments of his comedies, with three of their titles, remaining.

Though I claſs CHÆREMON amongſt the writers of the Middle Comedy, I have ſome doubt if he ſhould not have been in the liſt of Old Dramatiſts, being ſaid to have been the ſcholar of Socrates: He is cele-

brated by Ariſtotle, Athenæus, Suidas, Stobæus, Theophraſtus and others, and the titles of nine of his comedies are preſerved in thoſe authors, with ſome ſcraps of his dialogue. Ariſtotle relates that in his comedy of *The Hippocentaur* he introduced a rhapſody, in which he contrived to mix every ſpecies of metre, inventing, as it ſhould ſeem, a characteriſtic meaſure for a compound monſter out of nature.

Of CLEARCHUS we have a few fragments, and the titles of three comedies preſerved by Athenæus; the ſame author gives us the title of one comedy by CRITON, of four by CROBYLUS, and of two by DEMOXENUS, one of which is *The Self-Tormentor*, or *Heautontimorumenos*; this poet was an Athenian born, and ſeems to have been a voluminous writer. Of DEMETRIUS there remains only one fragment, yet we have teſtimony of his having been a comic poet of this period of great reputation.

DIODORUS was a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and the birth-place of many eminent poets and philoſophers; we have the titles of three of his comedies, and from the few

few fragments of his works now exiſting I have ſelected theſe which follow—

" This is my rule, and to this rule I'll hold,
" To chuſe my wife by merit not by gold;
" For on that one election muſt depend
" Whether I wed a fury or a friend."

" When your foe dies let all reſentment ceaſe,
" Make peace with death, and death ſhall give you
" peace."

I meet with another fragment of this author, which is ſo far curious, as it contains a bold blaſphemy againſt the ſupreme of the heathen deities, and marks the very looſe hold, which the eſtabliſhed religion had upon the minds of the common people of Athens at this period, who muſt have been wonderfully changed by the new philoſophy from the times of Æſchylus and Ariſtophanes, who both incurred their reſentment in a very high degree for daring to affront the Gods, though it is probable neither went the length of Diodorus's Paraſite, who aſſerts the ſuperior dignity, authority, and even divinity of his vocation with the following hardy alluſion to Jupiter himſelf— "All other arts," ſays he, " have been of

" man's invention without the help of the
" Gods, but Jupiter himſelf, who is our part-
" ner in the trade, firſt taught us how to play
" the paraſite, and he without diſpute is of
" all Gods the greateſt. 'Tis his cuſtom
" to make himſelf welcome in every houſe
" he enters, rich or poor, no matter which;
" wherever he finds the dinner-table neatly
" ſpread, the couches ready ſet, and all
" things in decent order, down ſits he with-
" out ceremony; eats, drinks and makes
" merry, and all at free coſt, cajoling his
" poor hoſt; and in the end, when he has
" filled his belly and bilked his club, coolly
" walks home at his leiſure.

DIONYSIUS the comic poet was alſo a native of Sinope, the countryman as well as contemporary of Diodorus. I have nothing but a ſhort ſentence from this author, which conveys an excellent maxim ſo neatly turned, that I ſhall ſet it down in the original—

Ἢ λέγε τὶ σιγῆς κρεῖττον, ἢ σιγὴν ἔχε.

" Either ſay ſomething better than nothing, or ſay
" nothing!'

The

The noted tyrant of Sicily of the above name was alſo a writer both of tragedy and comedy.

EPHIPPUS, a writer of comedy in this period, was a native of Athens, and one of the moſt celebrated poets of his age; we have the titles of twelve of his comedies, of all which that intitled *Philyra* was the moſt admired; this *Philyra* was the mother of Chiron the Centaur.

## No. CXLVI.

## EPICRATES.

EPICRATES was a native of the city of Ambraſia, the capital of Epirus; his reputation is high amongſt the writers of the claſs under our preſent review; he was ſomewhat junior in point of time to Antiphanes before mentioned, and, if we are to give credit to Athenæus, was an imitator of that poet's manner; it is ſaid that he went ſo far as to copy certain paſſages out of his comedies

dies and introduce them into his own. Five of his comedies are named, and the following remnant of a dialogue ridicules the frivolous diſquiſitions of the Academy in ſo pleaſant a ſtile of comic irony, that I think myſelf happy in the diſcovery of it. The learned reader will acknowledge a ſtriking ſimilitude in the manner to Ariſtophanes's remarks upon the occupations of Socrates's ſcholars in the comedy of *The Clouds*.

" *A.* I pray you, Sir, (for I perceive you learn'd
" In theſe grave matters) let my ignorance ſuck
" Some profit from your courteſy, and tell me
" What are you wiſe philoſophers engag'd in,
" Your Plato, Menedemus and Speuſippus?
" What mighty myſteries have they in projection?
" What new diſcoveries may the world expect
" From their profound reſearches? I conjure you,
" By Earth, our common mother, to impart them!
" *B.* Sir; you ſhall know at our great feſtival
" I was myſelf their hearer, and ſo much
" As I there heard will preſently diſcloſe,
" So you will give it ears, for I muſt ſpeak
" Of things perchance ſurpaſſing your belief,
" So ſtrange they will appear; but ſo it happen'd,
" That theſe moſt ſage Academicians ſate
" In ſolemn conſultation—on a cabbage.
" *A.* A cabbage! what did they diſcover there?
" *B.* Oh ſir! your cabbage hath it's ſex and gender,
" It's provinces, prerogatives and ranks,

" And

" And nicely handled breeds as many queſtions
" As it does maggots. All the younger fry
" Stood dumb with expectation and reſpect,
" Wond'ring what this ſame cabbage ſhould bring
" forth:
" The Lecturer ey'd them round, whereat a youth
" Took heart, and breaking firſt the awful ſilence,
" Humbly crav'd leave to think—that it was round;
" The cauſe was now at iſſue, and a ſecond
" Opin'd it was an herb—A third conceiv'd
" With due ſubmiſſion it might be a plant—
" The difference methought was ſuch, that each
" Might keep his own opinion and be right;
" But ſoon a bolder voice broke up the council,
" And, ſtepping forward, a Sicilian quack
" Told them their queſtion was abuſe of time,
" It was a cabbage, neither more nor leſs,
" And they were fools to prate ſo much about it—
" Inſolent wretch! amazement ſeiz'd the troop,
" Clamour and wrath and tumult rag'd amain,
" Till Plato, trembling for his own philoſophy,
" And calmly praying patience of the court,
" Took up the cabbage and adjourn'd the cauſe."

ERIPHUS was alſo a writer of the Middle Comedy, and like the poet laſt reviewed is charged by Athenæus with being a copyiſt of Antiphanes. Three ſmall fragments, and the titles of three plays, are every thing which now remains of this author.

EUBU-

## EUBULUS.

Eubulus, the ſon of Euphranor, and a native of Atarna in Leſbos, ranks with the moſt celebrated poets of this æra, and though Suidas enumerates only four and twenty of his comedies, Athenæus contends that he was the author of fifty, and the names of all theſe are ſtill upon the liſt. He flouriſhed in Olymp. CI, which is ſo high in the period now under review, as to make it matter of doubt whether the Old Comedy has not a joint claim to his productions with the Middle: Ammonius however expreſsly claſſes Eubulus amongſt the latter, and quotes his comedy of *The Cup Bearers*; it is from this very comedy, as it ſhould ſeem, that the famous paſſage was taken, in which he introduces Bacchus in perſon laying down to mankind theſe temperate and moral rules againſt the abuſe of his bleſſings—

" Three cups of wine a prudent man may take;
" The firſt of theſe for conſtitution's ſake;
" The ſecond to the girl he loves the beſt;
" The third and laſt to lull him to his reſt,
" Then home to bed!—but if a fourth he pours,
" That is the cup of folly and not ours;

" Loud

" Loud noiſy talking on the fifth attends;
" The ſixth breeds feuds and falling-out of friends;
" Seven beget blows and faces ſtain'd with gore;
" Eight, and the watch-patrole breaks ope the door;
" Mad with the ninth, another cup goes round,
" And the ſwill'd ſot drops ſenſeleſs to the ground."

When ſuch maxims of moderation proceed from the mouth of Bacchus, it argues great impiety in his votaries not to obey them.

The moſt elegant epigrammatiſt might be proud to father the following ingenious turn upon the emblem of Love, addreſſed to a painter—

" Why, fooliſh painter, give thoſe wings to Love?
" Love is not light, as my ſad heart can prove:
" Love hath no wings, or none that I can ſee;
" If he can fly—oh! bid him fly from me!"

## EUPHRON.

Euphron is another poet of our Middle liſt, and one whoſe fame has outlived the works on which it was founded. Six of his comedies only have bequeathed their names to us, and a very ſcanty portion of their contents. One of theſe was intitled *Adelphi*, another claimant perhaps upon Terence. Athenæus and Stobæus, (thanks to their paſſion

paſſion for quotations and fragments !) have favoured us with a few ſmall reliques.—There is ſomething in the following diſtich of a melancholy and touching ſimplicity—

" Tell me, all-judging Jove, if this be fair
" To make ſo ſhort a life ſo full of care ?"

What next enſues I recommend to the gentlemen, who amuſe themſelves with cutting out work for Doctors-Commons :

" Hence, vile adulterer, I ſcorn to gain
" Pleaſures extorted from another's pain !"

The antients had a notion, that a man, who took no care of his own affairs, was not the fitteſt perſon in the world to be entruſted with thoſe of others; writers for the ſtage muſt make the moſt of vulgar errors, whilſt they are in faſhion, and this may have betrayed our poet into a ſentiment, which modern wits will not give him much credit for—

" Let not his fingers touch the public cheſt,
" Who by his own profuſion is diſtreſt;
" For long long years of care it needs muſt take
" To heal thoſe wounds, which one ſhort hour will
" make."

I think

I think the reader will acknowledge a very ſpirited and ſtriking turn of thought in this ſhort apoſtrophe.

" Wretch! find new gods to witneſs to new lies,
" Thy perjuries have made the old too wiſe!"

## HENIOCHUS.

Heniochus, the author of a numerous collection of comedies, was born at Athens, a writer of a grave ſententious caſt, and one, who ſcrupled not to give a perſonal name to one of his comedies, written profeſſedly againſt the character of *Thorucion*, a certain military prefect in thoſe times, and a notorious traitor to his country. The titles of fifteen comedies are upon the liſt of this poet's works: from one of theſe a curious fragment has been ſaved, and though it ſeems rather of a political than a dramatic complexion, I think it's good ſenſe is ſufficient to recommend it to a place in this collection.

" I will enumerate to you ſeveral cities,
" which in the courſe of time have fallen
" into egregious folly and declenſion: You
" may demand why I inſtance them at this
" time

" time and in this place—I anſwer, that we
" are now preſent in the city of Olympia,
" and you may figure to yourſelf a kind of
" Pythian ſolemnity in the ſcene before us—
" Granted! you'll ſay, and what then?—
" Why then I may conceive theſe ſeveral ci-
" ties here aſſembled by their repreſenta-
" tives for the purpoſe of celebrating their
" redemption from ſlavery by ſolemn ſacri-
" fices to the Genius of Liberty: This per-
" formed, they deliver themſelves over to be
" governed at the diſcretion of two certain
" female perſonages, whom I ſhall name to
" you—the one Democracy, Ariſtocracy the
" other—From this fatal moment univerſal
" anarchy and miſrule inevitably fall upon
" thoſe cities, and they are loſt."

## MNESIMACHUS.

This poet is recorded by Ælian and Athenæus, and by the ſamples we have of his comedy, few as they are, we may ſee that he was a minute deſcriber of the familiar manners and characters of the age he lived in: I take him to have been a writer of a peculiar caſt, a dealer in low and loquacious dialogue, a ſtrong coarſe colouriſt, and one,

who,

who, if time had ſpared his works, would probably have imparted to us more of the *Coſtuma*, as it is called, than any of his contemporaries: I perſuade myſelf that the ſamples I am about to produce will juſtify theſe ſurmiſes with reſpect to Mneſimachus.

Jonſon could not deſcribe, nor Mortimer delineate, a company of banditti or bravos at their meal in bolder caricature, than what the following ſketch diſplays.

" Doſt know whom thou'rt to ſup with, friend?—I'll
" tell thee;
" With gladiators, not with peaceful gueſts;
" Inſtead of knives we're arm'd with naked ſwords,
" And ſwallow firebrands in the place of food:
" Daggers of Crete are ſerv'd us for confections,
" And for a plate of peaſe a fricaſſee
" Of ſhatter'd ſpears: the cuſhions we repoſe on
" Are ſhields and breaſt-plates, at our feet a pile
" Of ſlings and arrows, and our foreheads wreath'd
" With military enſigns, not with myrtle."

There remains a very curious fragment of a dialogue between a maſter and his ſlave, which lays open to the reader the whole catalogue of an Athenian fiſh-market, and after all the pains it has occaſioned me in the de-

cyphering,

cyphering, leaves me under the neceſſity of ſetting down a few of the articles in their original names, not being able to find any lexicon or grammarian in the humour to help me out of my difficulty.

" *Maſter.* Harkye, fellow! make the " beſt of your way to Phidon's riding-ſchool " (your road lies through the cypreſs-grove " burying-place to the forum by the public " baths, where our tribunes hold their meet- " ings) and tell thoſe pretty gentlemen, who " are there at their exerciſes of vaulting on " their horſes and off their horſes (you know " well enough whom I mean) tell 'em I ſay " that their ſupper is grown cold, their liquor " hot, their paſtry dry, their bread ſtale, " their roaſt done to powder, their ſalt-meat " ſtript from the very bones, their tripes, " chitterlings, ſauſages and ſtuft-puddings " mangled and devoured by gueſts, who are " before-hand with 'em: The glaſs has gone " round, and the wine is nearly out; the " company are at their frolicks, and the " houſe thrown out of windows—Now mark " and remember every ſyllable I have ſaid to " you—Doſt yawn, raſcal?—Let me hear if

" you

" you can repeat the meſſage I have given
" you.

" *Servant.* From the firſt word to the
" laſt, as you ſhall witneſs.—I am to bid
" thoſe ſparks come home and not loiter
" till the cook makes plunder of the broken
" victuals; I am to ſay the boil'd and the
" roaſt are ready; I am to reckon up their
" bill of fare, their onions, olives, garlick,
" coleworts, gourds, beans, lettuce, knot-
" graſs; their ſalted tunny-fiſh, their ſhad,
" ſturgeon, ſoals, conger, purple-fiſh and
" black-fiſh (both whole ones) their anchovy,
" mackarel, freſh tunny, gudgeons, rock-fiſh,
" dog-fiſh tails, cramp-fiſh, frog-fiſh, perch,
" baccalao, ſardin, ſeaweed-fiſh, ſea-urchin,
" ſurmullet, cuckow-fiſh, paſtinaca, lam-
" prey, barbel, grey-mullet, *Lebias*, *Sparus*,
" char, Ælian-fiſh, Thracian-fiſh, ſwallow-
" fiſh, prawns, calamary, flounder, ſhrimps,
" polypody, cuttle-fiſh, *Orphus*, lobſter, crab,
" bleak, needle-fiſh, ſprats, ſea-ſcorpion and
" grigg—I am to put them in mind of their
" roaſts without number, of their gooſe,
" pork, beef, lamb, mutton, goat, kid, pul-
" let, duck, ſwan, partridge, bergander, and
" a thouſand more—I am to warn them that

" their

" their meſſmates are already faſt by the
" teeth, chewing, gnawing, cutting, carving,
" boiling, roaſting, laughing, playing, danc-
" ing, junketting, drinking, mobbing, ſcuf-
" fling, boxing, battling,—that the pipers
" are at their ſport; every body ſinging,
" choruſſing, clamouring, whilſt the houſe
" ſmoaks with the odours of cinnamon, frank-
" incenſe, myrrh, ſweet-cane, ſtorax, aloes,
" ambergriſe, muſk, camphire, caſſia, and a
" flood of all other exquiſite perfumes—"

## No. CXLVII.

## MOSCHION.

MOSCHION ſtands upon the authority of Clemens Alexandrinus and Stobæus, as a writer of the Middle Comedy, and a dramatiſt of a very moral and pathetic turn; his fragments fully verify that character. A perſon in one of his dramas relates the following melancholy circumſtance:

" I met a lamentable example of fortune's
" inſtability—A prince of Argos begging his

" bread—The man, a while ago ſo celebrated
" for his great talents, high birth, and exalted
" rank, was now reduced to the loweſt ſtate
" of human wretchedneſs, an object of com-
" miſeration to every body who beheld him:
" Such of us as reached out the hand to
" him, or conſoled him with the words
" of pity for his miſerable condition, could
" not leave him without abundance of
" tears; ſurely ſuch a diſmal revolution of
" worldly fortune can never be contem-
" plated but with ſympathy and condo-
" lence."

The tender and religious ſentiments conveyed in the next fragment, which we owe to Clemens, certainly demand a place of honour, (was ſuch honour in my power to beſtow) in this collection.

" Let the earth cover and protect it's dead!
" And let man's breath thither return in peace
" From whence it came; his ſpirit to the ſkies,
" His body to the clay of which 'twas form'd,
" Imparted to him as a loan for life,
" Which he and all muſt render back again
" To earth, the common mother of mankind."

Again, in a ſtrain yet more elevated—

" Wound not the ſoul of a departed man!
" 'Tis impious cruelty; let Juſtice ſtrike
" The living, but in mercy ſpare the dead.
" And why purſue a ſhadow that is paſt?
" Why ſlander the deaf earth, that cannot hear,
" The dumb that cannot utter? When the ſoul
" No longer takes account of human wrongs,
" Nor joys nor ſorrows touch the mouldering heart,
" As well you may give feeling to the tomb,
" As what it covers—both alike defy you."

NICOSTRATUS comes next under our review, a poet in his claſs of great reputation, as Athenæus, Suidas, Laertius and others teſtify. His comedies were found after his death in a cheſt, where they had been long miſſing and much regretted; we have to the amount of fourteen of their titles, and are further informed that he was ſo excellent an actor, that it became a proverb of honour to pronounce upon any capital performer, that *He played in the ſtile of Nicoſtratus*. It is with regret I diſcover nothing in the few ſmall fragments of this eminent author and actor worth tranſlating; however, that I may not paſs over his remains without the grateful ceremony of beſtowing one ſmall tribute to his memory,

mory, I have rendered this ſhort epigrammatic diſtich into our language—

" If this inceſſant chattering be your plan,
" I would ye were a ſwallow, not a man!"

The talents of the greateſt actor at beſt can ſurvive him by tradition only, but when Nature to thoſe rare attributes adds the gift of a poetic genius, it gives a double poignancy to our regret, that time ſhould not have left a relique even of theſe more conſiderable than the above.

Of PHILIPPUS the comic poet I have no anecdotes to record, and nothing but the names of three comedies to refer to.

## PHŒNICIDES.

We are beholden to this poet for a very pleaſant narrative made by a lady of eaſy virtue, in which ſhe deſcribes certain of her keepers with a great deal of comic humour, and it is humour of a ſort, that has not evaporated by the intervention of twenty centuries; ſhe was tired of her trade, and therefore, though the theme be a looſe one, the moral of it is good: The lady is in converſation with a man named Pythias, but whether the friend of Damon

the Pythagorean, or ſome other, does not appear: The noble profeſſions of arms, phiſic, and philoſophy had taken their turns in her good graces, but for the credit they gained by the account, I think it is pretty equally divided amongſt them—

" So help me, Venus! as I'm fairly ſick,
" Sick to the ſoul, my Pythias, of this trade:—
" No more on't! I'll be no man's miſtreſs, I:
" Don't talk to me of Deſtiny; I've done with't;
" I'll hear no prophecies—for mark me well—
" No ſooner did I buckle to this buſineſs,
" Than ſtrait behold a Man of War aſſail'd me—
" He told me of his battles o'er and o'er,
" Shew'd me good ſtock of ſcars, but none of caſh,
" No, not a doit—but ſtill he vapour'd much
" Of what a certain Prince would do, and talk'd
" Of this and that commiſſion—in the clouds,
" By which he gull'd me of a twelvemonth's hope,
" Liv'd at free coſt, and fed me upon love.
" At length I ſent my man of valour packing,
" And a grave ſon of Phyſic fill'd his place:
" My houſe now ſeem'd an hoſpital of Lazars,
" And the vile beggar mangled without mercy,
" A very hangman bath'd in human gore.
" My Soldier was a prince compar'd to this,
" For his were merry fibs; this ſon of death
" Turn'd every thing he touch'd into a corpſe.
" When Fortune, who had yet good ſtore of ſpite,
" Now coupled me to a moſt learn'd Philoſopher;

" Plenty

" Plenty of beard he had, a cloak withal,
" Enough to ſpare of each, and moral maxims
" More than I could digeſt, but money—none;
" His ſect abhorr'd it; 'twas a thing proſcrib'd
" By his philoſophy, an evil root,
" And when I aſk'd him for a taſte, 'twas poiſon;
" Still I demanded it, and for the reaſon
" That he ſo ſlightly priz'd it—all in vain—
" I could not wring a drachma from his clutches—
" Defend me, Heaven! from all philoſophers!"

## SOTADES.

Sotades was a native Athenian, an elegant writer and in great favour with the theatre. I ſhall preſent the reader with one of his fragments, which will be a ſtrong contraſt to the foregoing one, and which ſeems to prove, amongſt many other inſtances, how much the grave and ſentimental comedy now began to be in faſhion with the Athenians.

" Is there a man, juſt, honeſt, nobly born?—
" Malice ſhould hunt him down. Does wealth attend
" him?
" Trouble is hard behind—Conſcience direct?—
" Beggary is at his heels: Is he an Artiſt?—
" Farewell, repoſe! An equal upright Judge?—
" Report ſhall blaſt his virtues: Is he ſtrong?—
" Sickneſs ſhall ſap his ſtrength; account that day,
" Which brings no new miſchance, a day of reſt;

" For what is man? what matter is he made of?
" How born? what is he and what ſhall he be?
" What an unnatural parent is this world,
" To foſter none but villains, and deſtroy
" All, who are benefactors to mankind!
" What was the fate of Socrates?—A priſon,
" A doſe of poiſon; tried, condemn'd and kill'd:
" How died Diogenes?—As a dog dies,
" With a raw morſel in his hungry throat:
" Alas for Æſchylus! muſing he walk'd,
" The ſoaring eagle dropt a tortoiſe down,
" And cruſh'd that brain, where Tragedy had birth;
" A paltry grape-ſtone choak'd the *Athenian Bee*:
" Maſtiffs of Thrace devour'd Euripides,
" And god-like Homer, woe the while! was ſtarv'd—
" Thus life, blind life teems with perpetual woes."

There is a melancholy grandeur in theſe ſentiments with a ſimplicity of expreſſion, which prove to us that theſe authors occaſionally digreſſed from the gay ſpirit of comedy into paſſages not only of the moſt ſerious, but ſublimeſt caſt; and I am perſuaded this ſpecimen of the poet Sotades, notwithſtanding the diſadvantages of tranſlation, will ſtrike the reader as an inſtance in point. Where but one fragment is to be found of a writer's works, and that one of ſo elevated a character, muſt it not impreſs the mind with deep regret to think how many noble ſtrains

ſtrains of poetry, how many elegant and brilliant turns of wit theſe compoſitions would have furniſhed, had they come down to us entire? and may I not flatter myſelf, that as many as feel this regret, will look with candour upon theſe attempts?

## STRATON.

This poet ſupplies us with the names of two comedies and the ſmall bequeſt of one fragment; it is however an acceptable one, being intereſting as recounting part of a dialogue, which to a certain degree gives ſome diſplay of character, and alſo as being of a facetious, comic caſt in the character of familiar life. The ſpeaker is ſome maſter of a family, who is complaining to his companion in the ſcene of the whimſical, conceited humour of his cook—

" I've harbour'd a He-Sphinx and not a Cook,
" For by the Gods he talk'd to me in riddles
" And coin'd new words that poſe me to interpret.
" No ſooner had he enter'd on his office,
" Than, eyeing me from head to foot, he cries—
" *How many mortals haſt thou bid to ſupper?*
" Mortals! quoth I, what tell you me of mortals?
" Let Jove decide on their mortality;
" You're crazy ſure; none by that name are bidden.

" *No Table-Uſher? no one to officiate*
" *As Maſter of the Courſes?*—No ſuch perſon;
" Moſchion and Niceratus and Philinus,
" Theſe are my gueſts and friends, and amongſt theſe
" You'll find no table-decker as I take it.
" *Gods! is it poſſible?* cried he: Moſt certain
" I patiently replied; He ſwell'd and huff'd,
" As if forſooth I had done him heinous wrong,
" And robb'd him of his proper dignity;
" Ridiculous conceit!—*What offering mak'ſt thou*
" *To Eryſichthon?* he demanded: None—
" *Shall not the wide-horn'd ox be fell'd?* cries he;
" I ſacrifice no ox—*Nor yet a wether?*
" Not I, by Jove; a ſimple ſheep perhaps:
" *And what's a wether but a ſheep?* cries he.
" I'm a plain man, my friend, and therefore ſpeak
" Plain language:—*What! I ſpeak as Homer does;*
" *And ſure a cook may uſe like privilege*
" *And more than a blind poet*—Not with me;
" I'll have no kitchen-Homers in my houſe;
" So pray diſcharge yourſelf!—This ſaid, we parted."

## No. CXLVIII.

## THEOPHILUS.

THE fragments of this poet ſupply me with a paſſage upon the fertile ſubject of love, which is of a very lively caſt, and in

in a miſcellaneous collection like this certainly deſerves to be received as one of the beauties of the Greek ſtage—

" If love be folly as the ſchools wou'd prove,
" The man muſt loſe his wits who falls in love;
" Deny him love, you doom the wretch to death,
" And then it follows he muſt loſe his breath.
" Good ſooth! there is a young and dainty maid
" I dearly love, a minſtrel ſhe by trade;
" What then? muſt I defere to pedant rule,
" And own that love transforms me to a fool?
" Not I, ſo help me! By the Gods I ſwear,
" The nymph I love is faireſt of the fair;
" Wiſe, witty, dearer to her poet's ſight,
" Than piles of money on an author's night;
" Muſt I not love her then? Let the dull ſot,
" Who made the law, obey it! I will not."

We have the names of ſeven comedies aſcribed to this author.

## TIMOCLES.

Of this name we have two comic poets upon record, one of whom was an Athenian born, and to him Suidas aſcribes ſix comedies; of the other's birth-place we have no account, but of his plays we have eleven titles, and the fragments of both are quoted in-

diſcriminately: Amongſt theſe I have ſelected one, which is ſo far matter of curioſity as it gives ſome deſcription of the illuſtrious orator Demoſthenes—

" Bid me ſay any thing rather than this;
" But on this theme Demoſthenes himſelf
" Shall ſooner check the torrent of his ſpeech
" Than I—Demoſthenes! that angry orator,
" That bold Briareus, whoſe tremendous throat,
" Charg'd to the teeth with battering-rams and ſpears,
" Beats down oppoſers; brief in ſpeech was he,
" But, croſt in argument, his threat'ning eyes
" Flaſh'd fire, whilſt thunder vollied from his lips."

To one of the poets of the name of Timocles, but to which I know not, we are alſo indebted for a complimentary alluſion to the powers of Tragedy; it is the only inſtance of the ſort, which the Greek Comedy now furniſhes, and I am gratified by the diſcovery, not only for the intrinſic merit of the paſſage, but for the handſome tribute which it pays to the moral uſes of the tragic drama.

" Nay, my good friend, but hear me! I confeſs
" Man is the child of ſorrow, and this world,
" In which we breathe, hath cares enough to plague us,
" But it hath means withal to ſooth theſe cares,

" And

" And he, who meditates on other's woes,
" Shall in that meditation loſe his own:
" Call then the tragic poet to your aid,
" Hear him, and take inſtruction from the ſtage:
" Let Telephus appear; behold a prince,
" A ſpectacle of poverty and pain,
" Wretched in both.—And what if you are poor?
" Are you a demi-god? are you the ſon
" Of Hercules? begone! complain no more.
" Doth your mind ſtruggle with diſtracting thoughts?
" Do your wits wander? are you mad? Alas!
" So was Alcmæon, whilſt the world ador'd
" His father as their God. Your eyes are dim;
" What then? the eyes of Oedipus were dark,
" Totally dark. You mourn a ſon; he's dead;
" Turn to the tale of Niobe for comfort,
" And match your loſs with her's. You're lame
" of foot;
" Compare it with the foot of Philoctetes,
" And make no more complaint. But you are old,
" Old and unfortunate; conſult Oëneus;
" Hear what a king endur'd, and learn content.
" Sum up your miſeries, number up your ſighs,
" The tragic ſtage ſhall give you tear for tear,
" And waſh out all afflictions but it's own."

With the poet XENARCHUS, author of eight dramas, I conclude my catalogue of the writers of the Middle Comedy; one ſhort but ſpirited apoſtrophe I collect from this poet, and I offer it in it's naturalized ſtate as a ſmall remembrance of my zeal to

catch at every relique of his ſhipwrecked muſe.

" Ah faithleſs women! when you ſwear
" I regiſter your oaths in air."

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I have now produced a liſt of comic poets, thirty-two in number, who were celebrated writers for the Athenian ſtage within the period we have been reviewing, and in theſe tranſlations the reader has before him every thing that time has ſpared of their productions except a few ſhort and inſignificant ſentences, which had nothing to recommend them: The imperfect anecdotes here given of the ſeveral authors may be thought to contain very little intereſting matter, but it has been no ſlight taſk to collect even theſe, and I am perſuaded that my ſearch has left nothing behind, which can give any further elucidation to the ſubject; if I were as ſecure of not having treſpaſſed upon the public patience through too much diligence and minuteneſs, I ſhould diſmiſs my anxiety.

The

The period of the Middle Comedy was of ſhort duration, and thirty-two comic authors are no inconſiderable number to have flouriſhed within that æra; yet we may well ſuppoſe others, and probably many others, did exiſt within the time, of whom no memorial whatever now ſurvives: Moſt of theſe names, which I have now for the firſt time brought together, will I dare ſay be new even to my learned readers, for not many men of a ſtudious turn, and fewer ſtill of claſſical taſte, will dedicate their time to thoſe dry and deterring books, in which theſe ſcattered reliques were depoſited, and on which they have hitherto depended for their almoſt deſperate chance of being reſcued from extinction. I mention this not oſtentatiouſly, as taking credit on the ſcore of induſtry and diſcovery, but hoping that the labour of the taſk will be ſome apology on my behalf to ſuch of my readers (if any ſuch to my ſorrow ſhall be found) who, having purchaſed theſe volumes with an eye to amuſement only, may have been tired by the peruſal of theſe papers, or, not caring to peruſe them, have been caſhiered of the juſt proportions of a volume.

To the candour of thoſe monthly publications which are concerned in the review of new books, I profeſs myſelf to be very highly indebted; that they have admitted and commended the ſincere and moral motives of my undertaking, is above meaſure gratifying to me; in this particular I know I have a juſt claim to their good report, becauſe they cannot credit me for more real love to mankind and more cordial zeal for their ſocial intereſts, than I truly have at heart, but for my ſucceſs as an author, (which has ſo much exceeded my expectations) I cannot deceive myſelf ſo far as to aſcribe it wholly to my own merits, when I muſt know how great a ſhare of it was the natural reſult of their recommending me to the world.

As I have not found any hints in theſe Reviews, nor in the reports which have come home to me, that have tended to diſcourage me in the proſecution of theſe reſearches into the characters and remains of the Greek dramatiſts, I have gone on with ardour, and ſhall go on, if life is granted me, to the end; the writers therefore of *The New Comedy* will come next under my review,

review, and as we deſcend in time, we ſhall encreaſe in matter; the celebrated names of Menander, Philemon, Diphilus, Apollodorus, and ſome few beſides, are not wholly left without record, every fragment that bears their ſtamp has been accounted ſo venerable, that ſome of the greateſt ſcholars of modern times have thought it an office of honour to be employed in the collection of them; none of theſe however have found their way into our language, and as I flatter myſelf theſe of the *Middle Comedy* have riſen upon their predeceſſors, I hope what is next to follow will not baulk the climax; my beſt care and fidelity ſhall be applied to the tranſlations of ſuch as I ſhall ſelect for the purpoſe, and as I have generally found the ſimplicity of their ſtile and ſentiment accord beſt to the eaſy metre of our old Engliſh dramatiſts, I ſhall moſtly endeavour to cloathe them in the dreſs of thoſe days, when Jonſon, Fletcher, and Maſſinger ſupported the ſtage. To theſe I ſhall probably add ſome ſelections from Ariſtophanes, which I would not inſert in their place, being aware that extracts upon a large ſcale would comparatively have extinguiſhed

tinguiſhed their contemporaries, when ſet beſide them upon a very contracted one.

Upon the whole, it will be my ambition to give to the world what has never yet been attempted, a compleat collection of the beauties of the Greek ſtage in our own language from the remains of more than fifty comic poets.

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## No. CXLIX.

NOTHING now remains for compleating the literary annals of Greece, according to the plan I have proceeded upon, but to give ſome account of the Drama within that period of time, which commences with the death of Alexander of Macedon and concludes with that of Menander, or at moſt extends to a very few years beyond it, when the curtain may figuratively be ſaid to have dropt upon all the glories of the Athenian ſtage.

This, though the laſt, is yet a brilliant æra, for now flouriſhed *Menander*, *Philemon*, *Diphilus*, *Apollodorus*, *Philippides*, *Poſidippus*; poets

poets no leſs celebrated for the luxuriancy than for the elegance of their genius; all writers of the *New Comedy*; which, if it had not all the wit and fire of the old ſatirical drama produced in times of greater public freedom, is generally reputed to have been far ſuperior to it in delicacy, regularity and decorum. All attacks upon living characters ceaſed with what is properly denominated the *Old Comedy*; the writers of the *Middle Claſs* contented themſelves with venting their raillery upon the works of their dramatic predeceſſors; the perſons and politics of their contemporaries were ſafe; whereas neither the higheſt ſtation, nor the brighteſt talents were any ſure protection from the unreſtrained invectives of the comic muſe in her earlieſt ſallies.

The poets under our preſent review were not however ſo cloſely circumſcribed, as to be afraid of indulging their talent for ridicule and ſatire upon topics of a general nature; without a latitude like this comedy could hardly have exiſted; but this was not all, for amongſt their fragments ſome are to be found, which advance ſentiments and opinions ſo directly in the teeth of the popular

pular religion, that we cannot but admire at the extraordinary toleration of their pagan audiences. *Juſtin* quotes a paſſage from Menander's comedy of *The Charioteer*, in which an old mendicant is introduced carrying about a painted figure of the Great Mother of the Gods, after the manner of the preſent Popiſh Roſaries, and begging a boon as uſual on thoſe occaſions; the perſon addreſſed for his ſubſcription, contemptuouſly replies—"I have no reliſh for ſuch "deities as ſtroll about with an old beggar-"woman from door to door, nor for that "painted cloth you have the impudence to "thruſt into my preſence: Let me tell you, "woman, if your Mother of the Gods was "good for any thing, ſhe would keep to "her own ſtation, and take charge of none "but thoſe, who merit her protection by "their piety and devotion." This rebuff is of a piece with the ſurly anſwer of the cynic *Antiſthenes*, recorded by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, when, being teazed by theſe mendicants, the philoſopher replied—"Let the "Gods provide for their own Mother; I am "not bound to maintain her." In another fragment, quoted both by *Clemens* and *Euſebius*,

*ſebius*, Menander breaks forth into a bolder rhapſody, which breathes the ſpirit and nearly the very words of the Hebrew prophets: a perſon (in what drama does not appear) addreſſes his companion in the ſcene to this effect—"If any man, O Pamphilus, thinks that God will be well pleaſed with the ſacrifice of multitudes of oxen or of goats, or of any other victims; or by robing his images in cloth of gold and purple, and decking them out with ivory and emeralds; that man deceives himſelf, and his imaginations are vain; let him rather ſtudy to conciliate God's favour by doing good to all men; let him abſtain from violation and adultery; let him not commit theft or murder through the luſt of money: nay covet not, O Pamphilus, ſo much even as the thread of another's needle, for God is ever preſent and his eye is upon thee." This will ſerve in the place of many more paſſages, which might be adduced, to prove that the comic poets of this period were not only bold declaimers againſt the vice and immorality of the age they lived in, but that they ventured upon truths and doctrines in religion

religion totally irreconcileable to the popular ſuperſtition and idolatries of the heathen world.

It was on the new comedy of the Greeks that the Roman writers in general founded their's, and this they ſeem to have accompliſhed by the ſervile vehicle of tranſlation: It is ſaid that Terence alone tranſlated all Menander's plays, and theſe by the loweſt account amounted to eighty; ſome authorities more than double them, an improbable number to have been compoſed by a poet, who died at the age of fifty, or very little after.

*Quin et longa dies delebit ſcripta Menandri,*
*Et quandoque levis carmina pulvis erunt.*

(T. FABER.)

*Menander* was born at Athens, the ſon of *Diopethes* and *Hegeſiſtrata:* He was educated in the ſchool of *Theophraſtus* the peripatetic, Ariſtotle's ſucceſſor: At the early age of twenty he began to write for the ſtage, and his paſſions ſeem to have been no leſs forward and impetuous than his genius; his attachment to the fair ſex, and eſpecially to his miſtreſs Glycera, is upon record, and was vehement

vehement in the extreme; ſeveral of his epiſtles to that celebrated courteſan, written in a very ardent ſtile, were collected and made public after his deceaſe: The celebrity of his muſe, and the brilliancy of his wit were probably his chief recommendations to that lady's favour; for it ſhould ſeem that nature had not been very partial to his external, beſides which he ſquinted moſt egregiouſly, and was of a temper extremely iraſcible: If we were to take his character as a writer from no other authorities but of the fragments, we ſhould form a very different idea from that of *Pliny*, who ſays he was *omnis luxuriæ interpres*, and this even *Plutarch* his avowed panegyriſt is candid enough to admit: Ovid alſo ſays—

"The gay Menander charms each youthful heart,
"And Love in every fable claims a part."

However this may be, the remains, which have come down to us, bear the ſtamp of an auſtere and gloomy muſe rather than of a wanton and voluptuous one; but theſe it muſt be owned prove little; *Terence* is ſuppoſed to have copied all his comedies from Menander, except the *Phormio* and the *Hecyra*,

*cyra*, and he gives us the beſt inſight into the character of his elegant original.

All Greece ſeems to have joined in lamenting the premature loſs of this celebrated poet, who unfortunately periſhed as he was bathing in the Piræan harbour, to which *Ovid* alludes in his *Ibis*—

*Comicus ut liquidis periit dum nabat in undis.*

This happened in Olymp. CXXII.; his firſt comedy, intitled *Orge* was performed in Olymp. CXV, which gives him ſomething leſs than thirty years for the production of more than one hundred plays, and if we take the former account of his beginning to write for the ſtage at the age of twenty, it will agree with what we have before ſaid reſpecting the age at which he died.

Fatal as was the Piræan ſea to the perſon of this lamented poet, poſterity has more cauſe to execrate that barbarous gulf, which has ſwallowed up his works; nor his alone, but thoſe of above two hundred other eminent dramatic poets, whoſe labours are totally loſt and extinguiſhed. We have ſome lines of *Callimachus* upon the death of *Menander*, who was one amongſt many of his poetic

poetic ſurvivors, that paid the tribute of their ingenious ſorrow to his memory: Nor poets only, but princes bewailed his loſs, particularly, *Ptolemy* the ſon of *Lagus*, who loved and favoured him very greatly, and maintained a friendly correſpondence with him till his death; ſome of Menander's letters to this prince were publiſhed with thoſe addreſſed to his beloved Glycera.

Though many great authorities concur in placing Menander decidedly at the head of all the comic writers of his time, yet his contemporaries muſt have been of a different opinion, or elſe his rivals were more popular with their judges, for out of one hundred and five comedies, which *Apollodorus* aſcribes to him, he tells us that he obtained only eight prizes, and that *Philemon* in particular triumphed over him in the ſuffrages of the theatre very frequently. If theſe deciſions were ſo glaringly unjuſt and partial as we are taught to believe they were, we have ſome ſort of apology for the ſarcaſtic queſtion put to his ſucceſsful competitor, when upon meeting him he ſaid—"Do you not bluſh, "Philemon, when you prevail over me?" This anecdote however at beſt only proves

that Menander rated his own merits very highly, and that, if they were unjuſtly treated by thoſe, who decided for Philemon, he laid the blame upon the wrong perſon, and betrayed a very irritable temper upon the occaſion.

We have a collection of Menander's fragments, and the titles of ſeventy-three comedies; the fragments conſiſt only of ſhort ſentences, and do not give us the ſpirit and character of the dialogue, much leſs of any one entire ſcene; for though *Hertelius* has gone further than *Grotius* and *Le Clerc* in arranging them under diſtinct topics, and has brought into one view every paſſage of a correſpondent ſort, ſtill it is a mere disjointed medley, intereſting only to the curious, but affording little edification to the generality of readers: Many of them however are to be reſpected for their moral ſentiments, ſome are of a very elevated caſt, and others, (more in number than I could wiſh) of a gloomy, acrimonious and moroſe quality.

Antient authorities are nevertheleſs ſo loud in the praiſe of Menander, that we cannot doubt of his excellence. *Quintilian* after applauding him for his peculiar addreſs in preſerving

preſerving the manners and diſtinctions proper to every character he introduces on his ſcene, adds in general terms, "that he "eclipſes every writer of his claſs, and by "the ſuperior brilliancy of his genius throws "them all into ſhade."—He condemns the perverted judgment of his contemporaries for affecting to prefer Philemon on ſo many occaſions; and *C. J. Cæſar*, whilſt he is paſſing a compliment upon Terence, ſtiles him only *dimidiatum Menandrum*. *Dion Chryſoſtom* recommends him as a model for all who ſtudy to excel in oratory, "and let none of "our wiſe men reprehend me," he adds, "for preferring Menander to the old comic "poets, inaſmuch as his art in delineating "the various manners and graces is more to "be eſteemed than all the force and vehe-"mence of the antient drama." There is ſo much claſſical elegance in the lines, which *T. Faber* has prefixed to his edition of *Terence*, particularly in the introductory ſtanza, and this is withal ſo appoſite to the ſubject in hand, that I ſhall conclude this paper by tranſcribing it.

*Sacrum Menandri pectus*
*Aura jam reliquerat,*

*Vagulaque animula*
*Elyſias penetrarat oras:*
*Tum dolore percitæ,*
*Virgineaſque*
*Suffuſæ lacrymis genas,*
*Huc et illuc curſitarunt*
*Perque lucos, perque montes,*
*Perque vallium ſinus,*
*Curſitarunt Gratiæ,*
*Querentes ſibi*
*Queis nova ſedibus*
*Templa ponere poſſent.*

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## No. CL.

*Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vaſto.*
(VIRGIL.)

THE various authors, who have contributed to the collection of Menander's remains, ſeem to have extracted from him, as if by general agreement, little elſe but the moſt unfavourable delineations of the human character: So far from finding thoſe facetious and ſprightly ſallies to be expected from a comic writer, thoſe voluptuous deſcriptions, which Pliny alludes to, or any fragments of the love ſcenes Ovid tells us he

he ſo abounded in, we meet a melancholy diſplay of the miſeries, the enormities, the repinings of mankind.

What can be more gloomy and miſanthropic than the following ſtrain of diſcontent, extracted by Euſtathius!—

" Suppoſe ſome God ſhould ſay"—' Die when thou
' wilt,
' Mortal, expect another life on earth;
' And for that life make choice of all creation
' What thou wilt be; dog, ſheep, goat, man or horſe;
' For live again thou muſt; it is thy fate:
' Chuſe only in what form; there thou art free—'
" So help me, Crato, I wou'd fairly anſwer—
" Let me be all things, any thing but man!
" He only of all creatures feels affliction:
" The generous horſe is valued for his worth,
" And dog by merit is preferr'd to dog;
" The warrior cock is pamper'd for his courage,
" And awes the baſer brood—But what is man?
" Truth, virtue, valour, how do they avail him?
" Of this world's good the firſt and greateſt ſhare
" Is flattery's prize; the informer takes the next,
" And barefaced knavery garbles what is left.
" I'd rather be an aſs than what I am,
" And ſee theſe villains lord it o'er their betters."

Another fragment preſents itſelf of the ſame caſt, but coloured a little nearer to the hue of comedy—

" All creatures are more bleſt in their condition,
" And in their natures worthier than man.
" Look at yond aſs!—a ſorry beaſt, you'll ſay,
" And ſuch in truth he is—poor, hapleſs thing!
" Yet theſe his ſufferings ſpring not from himſelf,
" For all that Nature gave him he enjoys.
" Whilſt we, beſides our neceſſary ills,
" Make ourſelves ſorrows of our own begetting;
" If a man ſneeze, we're ſad—for that's ill luck;
" If he traduce us, we run mad with rage;
" A dream, a vapour throws us into terrors,
" And let the night-owl hoot we melt with fear
" Anxieties, opinions, laws, ambition,
" All theſe are torments we may thank ourſelves for."

The reader will obſerve that theſe are ſpecimens of a general diſguſt againſt mankind, and of diſcontent with the common lot of human life; as ſuch they can claſs with the humour of no other character but that of an abſolute miſanthrope, a kind of *Timon*: for general invective differs widely from that, which is pointed againſt any particular vice or folly, and in fact can hardly be conſidered as falling within the province of comedy in any caſe.

If Menander has been juſtly celebrated for his faithful pictures of the living manners of the age he wrote in, we cannot but receive a

gloomy impreſſion from the dark and diſmal tints, in which theſe ſketches are caſt; and though the age we live in hath follies and failings enough ſtill to feed the comic poet's appetite for ſatire, we may conſole ourſelves in the compariſon of our own time with his, provided the ſtage is to be regarded as a faithful mirror in both inſtances. It is not however improbable, but the writers of the *new comedy* might fall with more ſeverity upon general vices, to revenge themſelves for the reſtrictions they were ſubjected to with reſpect to perſonalities: Add to this, that as far as the early Chriſtian writers were concerned in ſelecting theſe paſſages, it may well be ſuppoſed they would naturally take the moſt moral and ſententious from amongſt the comedies they quoted, and ſuch as afforded grave and uſeful remarks upon life, harmonizing with their own doctrines and inſtructions. More eſpecially, it is to be ſuppoſed, that they would eagerly catch at any of thoſe paſſages, which exhibit purer and more worthy notions of the Being and Providence of God, than the vulgar herd of Heathens were known to entertain: Of this

caſt is the following contemptuous ridicule upon the Pagan ceremony of luſtration.

" If your complaints were ſerious, 'twould be well
" You ſought a ſerious cure, but for weak minds
" Weak med'cines may ſuffice—Go, call around you
" The women with their purifying water;
" Drug it with ſalt and lentils, and then take
" A treble ſprinkling from the holy meſs:
" Now ſearch your heart; if that reproach you not,
" Then and then only you are truly pure."

(EX FAMULO MATRIS IDEÆ.)

I am ſorry to remark, that amongſt all the fragments of this poet not one has been preſerved, that is ſtampt with even the ſlighteſt commendation of the fair ſex: On the contrary I find abundance of invective, chiefly againſt marriage and married women, often coarſe and always bitter: I may venture to ſay, if there was a ſingle woman in all Athens, who merited one good word, it is one more than the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny can diſcover in his remains. Mark how he rails!—

" If ſuch the ſex, was not the ſentence juſt,
" That rivetted Prometheus to his rock?—
" —Why, for what crime?—A ſpark, a little ſpark;
" But, Oh ye Gods! how infinite the miſchief—
" That little ſpark gave being to a woman,
" And let in a new race of plagues to curſe us.

" Where

" Where is the man that weds? ſhew me the wretch:
" Woe to his lot!—Inſatiable deſires,
" His nuptial bed defil'd, poiſonings and plots
" And maladies untold— theſe are the fruits
" Of marriage, theſe the bleſſings of a wife."

The poet, who can thus lend his wit to libel the greateſt bleſſing of life, may well be ingenious in depreciating life itſelf—

" The lot of all moſt fortunate is his,
" Who having ſtaid juſt long enough on earth
" To feaſt his ſight with this fair face of nature,
" Sun, ſea and clouds and Heaven's bright ſtarry
" fires,
" Drops without pain into an early grave.
" For what is life, the longeſt life of man,
" But the ſame ſcene repeated o'er and o'er?
" A few more ling'ring days to be conſum'd
" In throngs and crowds, with ſharpers, knaves and
" thieves;
" From ſuch the ſpeedieſt riddance is the beſt."

Having given ſome paſſages from this poet, where he ſpeaks in the character of a miſanthropiſt, it is but juſtice to exhibit him as a moraliſt: If the following fragment ſuggeſts no new ideas upon the ſubject of *Envy*, it will at leaſt ſerve to convince us that mankind in all ages have thought alike upon that deſpicable paſſion—

" Thou ſeem'ſt to me, young man, not to perceive
" That every thing contains within itſelf
" The ſeeds and ſources of its own corruption:
" The cankering ruſt corrodes the brighteſt ſteel;
" The moth frets out your garment, and the worm
" Eats its ſlow way into the ſolid oak;
" But Envy, of all evil things the worſt,
" The ſame to day, to-morrow and for ever,
" Saps and conſumes the heart, in which it lurks."

In the fragment next enſuing an old man is reproved for the vice of covetouſneſs; there is a delicacy in the manner of it, that well becomes both the age and condition of the ſpeaker, for he is a youth, and ſon to the character whom he addreſſes: This fragment is extracted from the comedy intitled *Dyſcolus (the Churl)* which Plautus is ſaid to have tranſlated and performed under its original title; but of this only a few fragments remain in our volume of that poet; probably the father herein addreſſed is the perſon who gives the name to the comedy—

" Weak is the vanity, that boaſts of riches,
" For they are fleeting things; were they not ſuch,
" Could they be your's to all ſucceeding time,
" 'Twere wiſe to let none ſhare in the poſſeſſion,
" But if whate'er you have is held of fortune
" And not of right inherent, why, my father,

" Why

" Why with ſuch niggard jealouſy engroſs
" What the next hour may raviſh from your graſp,
" And caſt into ſome worthleſs favourite's lap?
" Snatch then the ſwift occaſion while 'tis your's;
" Put this unſtable boon to noble uſes;
" Foſter the wants of men, impart your wealth
" And purchaſe friends; 'twill be more laſting trea-
" ſure,
" And, when misfortune comes, your beſt reſource."

There is another fragment of a more comic ſort, which is a relique of *The Minſtrel*, pointed at the ſame vice—

" Ne'er truſt me, Phanias, but I thought till now,
" That you rich fellows had the knack of ſleeping
" A good ſound nap, that held you for the night;
" And not like us poor rogues, who toſs and turn,
" Sighing, *Ah me!* and grumbling at our duns:
" But now I find, in ſpite of all your money,
" You reſt no better than your needy neighbours,
" And ſorrow is the common lot of all."

We are indebted to Plutarch for a very reſpectable fragment of his favourite poet; he quotes it for the conſolatory advice it contains, and addreſſes it to Apollonius; I give it to my readers as one of the moſt valuable ſpecimens of its author.

" If you, O Trophimus, and you alone
" Of all your mother's ſons have Nature's charter

" For privilege of pleaſures uncontroul'd,
" With full exemption from the ſtrokes of Fortune,
" And that ſome god hath ratified the grant,
" You then with cauſe may vent your loud reproach,
" For he hath broke your charter and betray'd you:
" But if you live and breathe the common air
" On the ſame terms as we do, then I tell you,
" And tell it in the tragic poet's words—
*Of your philoſophy you make no uſe,*
*If you give place to accidental evils—*
" The ſum of which philoſophy is this—
" You are a man, and therefore Fortune's ſport,
" This hour exalted and the next abas'd:
" You are a man, and, tho' by nature weak,
" By nature arrogant, climbing to heights
" That mock your reach and cruſh you in the fall:
" Nor was the bleſſing you have loſt the beſt
" Of all life's bleſſings, nor is your misfortune
" The worſt of its afflictions; therefore, Trophimus,
" Make it not ſuch by overſtrain'd complaints,
" But to your diſappointment ſuit your ſorrow."

The lines in Italics quoted from *Shakſpere*'s *Julius Cæſar*, not only correſpond with the exact meaning of the original, but are alſo appoſite as a quotation from a tragic poet, Menander himſelf having applied the words of ſome one of the writers of tragedy, probably *Euripides*.

Amongſt the ſmaller fragments there are ſeveral good apothegms, ſome brief moral maxims

maxims well expreſſed, and though not many of thoſe witty points, which are ſo frequent in *Ariſtophanes*, yet there are ſome ſpecimens of the *vis comica*, which have a very ingenious turn of words in their own tongue; but generally ſuch paſſages elude tranſlation.—This quaint confeſſion from the mouth of an old miſer is of that ſort.—"I own I am rich, abominably rich; all the "world accuſes me of being a very warm "old fellow, but not a ſoul alive can ſlander "me ſo far as to ſay I am a happy one."—The following ſcrap once belonged to *The Thraſyleon*;

"You ſay not always wiſely, *Know thyſelf!*
"Know others, oft times is the better maxim."

A ſtrong moral truth told with epigrammatic neatneſs ſtrikes me in this pointed remark—

"Of all bad things, with which mankind are curſt,
"Their own bad tempers ſurely are the worſt."

I could not paſs over a ſhort but touching apoſtrophe quoted from the comedy of *The Olynthian*—

" What pity 'tis, when happy Nature rears
" A noble pile, that Fortune ſhould o'erthrow it!"

I ſhall conclude with a fragment of the declamatory ſort, not as offering any novelty either in the ſentiment or expreſſion, but ſimply for the ſake of contraſting it with other ſpecimens—

" If you wou'd know of what frail ſtuff you're made,
" Go to the tombs of the illuſtrious Dead;
" There reſt the bones of Kings, there Tyrants rot;
" There ſleep the Rich, the Noble and the Wiſe;
" There Pride, Ambition, Beauty's faireſt form,
" All duſt alike, compound one common maſs:
" Reflect on theſe, and in them ſee yourſelf."

I now take leave of Menander, the moſt renowned of the writers of the latter comedy, and if my readers ſhall remark, that theſe fragments of a poet ſo eminent in his time, offer nothing which has not been ſaid over and over again by poets of our own, I hope it will ſerve to ſtrengthen their conviction, that frequently there ſhall be a coincidence of ſentiment and expreſſion between authors without communication; for it will hardly be ſuppoſed that plagiariſms have been committed upon theſe fragments, and much leſs upon

upon others of more obſcurity, which I have in former papers introduced into our language.

In ſhort I ſhould be happy, if any thing I have now done or may hereafter do, ſhall ſerve to mitigate the zeal of critics for detecting their contemporaries in pretended pilferings and miſdemeanours, where the *letter* of the law may perhaps appear againſt them, but the *ſpirit* of it, if interpreted with candour, condemns them not. I would call upon them, as *Terence* did upon his audience, to reflect that men in all ages will think and ſpeak alike.—

*Nullum eſt jam dictum, quod non dictum ſit prius:*
*Quare æquum eſt vos cognoſcere atque ignoſcere,*
*Quæ veteres factitarunt ſi faciunt novi.*

## No. CLI.

*Habent tamen et alli quoque comici, ſi cum venia legantur, quædam, quæ poſſis decerpere, et præcipue* Philemon; *qui, ut pravis ſui temporis judiciis Menandro ſæpe prælatus eſt, ita conſenſu tamen omnium meruit eſſe ſecundus.*

(QUINTIL. LIB. X.)

THERE is not amongſt all the Greek dramatic poets a more amiable character than *Philemon:* He was a Syracuſan by *Suidas*'s account, but *Strabo* ſays he was born in Solæ, a city of Cilicia: He was ſome years older than Menander, and no unworthy rival of that poet, though more frequently ſucceſsful in his competitions with him than the critics in general ſeem to think he deſerved to be: Of this we can form little or no judgment; they who had acceſs to the works of both authors, had the beſt materials to decide upon. *Apuleius* however ſpeaks rather doubtingly in the compariſon, for he ſays of Philemon that he was *fortaſſe impar*; to which he ſubjoins, that

that " though his frequent triumphs over " Menander are not reputable to inſiſt upon, " yet there are to be found in him many " witty ſtrokes, plots ingeniouſly diſpoſed, " diſcoveries ſtrikingly brought to light, " characters well adapted to their parts, " ſentiments that accord with human life;" —*Joca non infra ſoccum, ſeria non uſque cothurnum*, viz. " Jeſts that do not degrade " the ſock, gravity that does not intrench " upon the buſkin."

Philemon lived to the extraordinary age of one hundred and one years, in which time he compoſed ninety comedies? a competent collection it muſt be owned, though not to be compared to the bulk of Menander's productions, who in half the time wrote more in number, and with a rapidity, for which we have his own word, " for when I have once deter- " mined upon the plot," ſays he, " I conſider " the work as finiſhed." The longevity of Philemon was the reſult of great temperance and a placid frame of mind: Frugal to a degree that ſubjected him to the charge of avarice, he never weakened his faculties and conſtitution by exceſs, and as he ſummed up all his wiſhes in one rational and moderate petition

tition to Heaven, which throws a moſt favourable light upon his character, it is with pleaſure I record it.—" I pray for health in " the firſt place; in the next for ſucceſs in " my undertakings; thirdly, for a chear- " ful heart; and laſtly, to be out of debt to " all mankind."—This temperate petition ſeems to have been granted in all particulars, he was bleſſed with a long and healthful life; he was ſucceſsful in his undertakings to a degree, which poſterity ſeems to think above his merits, and he triumphed over all his competitors, more perhaps through the ſuavity of his manners than from any actual ſuperiority of his talents: That he was of a gay and happy ſpirit there is every reaſon to believe, and his œconomy ſecured to him that independant competency, which put him in poſſeſſion of the final object of his wiſhes. As he lived in conſtant ſerenity of mind, ſo he died without pain of body; for having called together a number of his friends to the reading of a play, which he had newly finiſhed, and ſitting, as was the cuſtom in that ſerene climate, under the open canopy of Heaven, an unforeſeen fall of rain broke up the company juſt when the old man had got

got into his third act in the very warmeſt intereſts of his fable: His hearers, diſappointed by this unluckly check to their entertainment, interceded with him for the remainder on the day following, to which he readily aſſented; and a great company being then aſſembled, whom the fame of the rehearſal had brought together, they ſate a conſiderable time in eager expectation of the poet, till wearied out with waiting, and unable to account for his impunctuality, ſome of his intimates were diſpatcht in queſt of him, who, having entered his houſe and made their way to his chamber, found the old man dead on his couch, in his uſual meditating poſture, his features placid and compoſed, and with every ſymptom that indicated a death without pain or ſtruggle.

This is *Apulieus*'s account, but *Oelian* embelliſhes the ſtory with a viſion, in which he pretends that nine fair damſels appeared to Philemon, and upon his accoſting them as they were going out of the door, demanding why they would leave him, they told him it was becauſe it was not permitted to man to hold converſe with the Immortals: Upon waking from this trance or viſion, Philemon related

related it to his page, and then getting up returned to his ſtudies, and put the laſt hand to the comedy he was employed upon: "That done," ſays *Oelian*, "he ſtretched "himſelf on his couch and quietly expired." From this ſilly anecdote he draws an inference, which without his help the world had probably diſcovered, viz. *That Philemon truly was in favour with the Muſes.*

*Valerius Maximus* varies from both theſe authors in his account of the death of this aged poet; he tells us Philemon was ſuffocated by a ſudden fit of laughter upon ſeeing an aſs, who had found his way into the houſe, devour a plate of figs, which his page had provided for him; that he called out to the boy to drive away the aſs, but when this order was not executed before the animal had emptied the plate, he bade his page pour out a goblet of wine and preſent it to the plunderer to compleat his entertainment; tickled with the pleaſantry of this conceit, and no leſs with the groteſque attitude and adventure of the animal, Philemon was ſeized with a fit of laughing, and in that fit expired.

The fragments of Philemon are in general of

of a ſentimental, tender caſt, and though they enforce ſound and ſtrict morality, yet no one inſtance occurs of that gloomy miſanthropy, that harſh and dogmatizing ſpirit, which too often marks the maxims of his more illuſtrious rival: The following ſpecimen will illuſtrate what I aſſert—It is clear that our poet has *Æſchylus* in his eye.

" All are not Juſt, becauſe they do no wrong,
" But he, who will not wrong me when he may,
" He is the truly Juſt. I praiſe not them,
" Who in their petty dealings pilfer not;
" But him, whoſe conſcience ſpurns a ſecret fraud,
" When he might plunder and defy ſurprize:
" His be the praiſe, who looking down with ſcorn
" On the falſe judgment of the partial herd,
" Conſults his own clear heart, and boldly dares
" To be, not to be thought an honeſt Man."

I flatter myſelf the reader will be pleaſed with the following animated apoſtrophe, which is a fragment of *The Ignifer*—

" Now by the Gods, it is not in the power
" Of painting or of ſculpture to expreſs
" Aught ſo divine as the fair form of Truth!
" The creatures of their art may catch the eye,
" But her ſweet nature captivates the ſoul."

I ſhall

I ſhall next produce a paſſage from *The Pyrrhus*, which breathes ſo ſoft and placid a ſpirit, and ſo perfectly harmonizes with the amiable character of the poet I am reviewing, that it is with pleaſure I preſent it to my readers—

" Philoſophers conſume much time and pains
" To ſeek the Sovereign Good, nor is there one,
" Who yet hath ſtruck upon it: Virtue ſome,
" And Prudence ſome contend for, whilſt the knot
" Grows harder by their ſtruggle to untye it.
" I, a mere clowu, in turning up the ſoil
" Have dug the ſecret forth—All-gracious Jove!
" 'Tis Peace, moſt lovely and of all belov'd;
" Peace is the bounteous Goddeſs, who beſtows
" Weddings and holidays and joyous feaſts,
" Relations, friends, health, plenty, ſocial comforts
" And pleaſures, which alone make life a bleſſing."

*Stobæus* has preſerved a fragment of *The Ephebus*, which is of a mild and plaintive character; though it ſpeaks the language of the deepeſt ſorrow, it ſpeaks at the ſame time the language of humanity; there is no turbulence, no invective; it is calculated to move our pity, not excite our horror—

" 'Tis not on them alone, who tempt the ſea,
" That the ſtorm breaks, it whelms e'en us, O Laches,
" Whether

" Whether we pace the open colonnade,
" Or to the inmoſt ſhelter of our houſe
" Shrink from its rage. The ſailor for a day,
" A night perhaps, is bandied up and down,
" And then anon repoſes, when the wind
" Veers to the wiſht-for point, and wafts him home:
" But I know no repoſe; not one day only,
" But every day to the laſt hour of life
" Deeper and deeper I am plung'd in woe."

In all the remains of this engaging author there ſeems a characteriſtic gentleneſs of manners; where he gives advice, it is recommended rather than impoſed; his reproofs are ſoftened with ſuch an air of good humour, as gives a grace to inſtruction, and ſmiles while it corrects: Can experience tutor indiſcretion in milder terms than theſe?—

" O Cleon, ceaſe to trifle thus with life:
" A mind, ſo barren of experience,
" Can hoard up nought but miſery, believe me.
" The ſhipwreckt mariner muſt ſink outright,
" Who makes no effort to regain the ſhore;
" The needy wretch, who never learnt a trade,
" And will not work, muſt ſtarve—*What then*, you
" cry?
" *My riches*—Frail ſecurity—*My farms*,
" *My houſes, my eſtate*—Alas, my friend,

" Fortune

" Fortune makes quick diſpatch, and in a day
" Can ſtrip you bare as beggary itſelf.
" Grant that you now had piloted your bark
" Into good fortune's haven, anchor'd there
" And moor'd her ſafe as caution cou'd deviſe;
" Yet if the headſtrong paſſions ſeize the helm
" And turn her out to ſea, the ſtormy guſts
" Shall riſe and blow you out of ſight of port,
" Never to reach proſperity again—
" *What tell you me? have I not friends to fly to?*
" *I have: And will not thoſe kind friends protect me?*—
" Better it were you ſhall not need their ſervice,
" And ſo not make the trial: Much I fear
" Your ſinking hand wou'd only graſp a ſhade."

Many of his maxims and remarks are neatly expreſſed and ingeniouſly conceived; they have all a tincture of pleaſantry, which without impairing the morality or good ſenſe they convey, takes off the gloom and ſolemnity, which the ſame thoughts, otherwiſe expreſſed, might have.

" Two words of nonſenſe are two words too much;
" Whole volumes of good ſenſe will never tire.
" What multitudes of lines hath Homer wrote!
" Who ever thought he wrote one line too much?"

Again—

Again—

" If what we have we uſe not, and ſtill covet
" What we have not, we are cajol'd by fortune
" Of preſent bliſs, of future by ourſelves."

---

" Still to be rich is ſtill to be unhappy;
" Still to be envied, hated and abus'd;
" Still to commence new law ſuits, new vexations;
" Still to be carking, ſtill to be collecting,
" Only to make your funeral a feaſt,
" And hoard up riches for a thriftleſs heir:
" Let me be light in purſe and light in heart;
" Give me ſmall means, but give content withal,
" Only preſerve me from the law, kind Gods,
" And I will thank you for my poverty."

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" Extremes of fortune are true Wiſdom's teſt,
" And he's of men moſt wiſe, who bears them beſt."

## No. CLII.

THE poet *Diphilus* was a native of Sinope, a city of Pontus, and contemporary with Menander. *Clemens Alexandrinus* applauds him for his comic wit and humour; *Euſebius* ſays the ſame, and adds a further encomium in reſpect of the ſententious and moral character of his drama. The poet *Plautus* ſpeaks of him in his prologue to *The Caſina*, and acknowledges the excellence of the original upon which he had formed his comedy. He died at Smyrna, a city of Ionia, and was author of one hundred comedies, of which we have a liſt of two-and-thirty titles, and no inconſiderable collection of fragments; out of theſe I have ſelected the following example—

" We have a notable good law at Corinth,
" Where, if an idle fellow outruns reaſon,
" Feaſting and junketing at furious coſt,
" The ſumptuary proctor calls upon him
" And thus begins to ſift him—You live well,

" But

" But have you well to live? You ſquander freely,
" Have you the wherewithal? have you the fund
" For theſe out-goings? If you have, go on!
" If you have not, we'll ſtop you in good time
" Before you outrun honeſty; for he,
" Who lives we know not how, muſt live by plunder;
" Either he picks a purſe, or robs a houſe,
" Or is accomplice with ſome knaviſh gang,
" Or thruſts himſelf in crowds to play th' informer,
" And put his perjur'd evidence to ſale:
" This a well-order'd city will not ſuffer:
" Such vermin we expel.—*And you do wiſely:*
" *But what is this to me?*—Why, this it is:
" Here we behold you every day at work,
" Living forſooth! not as your neighbours live,
" But richly, royally, ye gods!—Why, man,
" We cannot get a fiſh for love or money,
" You ſwallow the whole produce of the ſea:
" You've driven our citizens to browze on cabbage;
" A ſprig of parſley ſets them all a-fighting,
" As at the Iſthmian games: If hare, or partridge,
" Or but a ſimple thruſh comes to the market,
" Quick, at a word you ſnap him: By the gods!
" Hunt Athens through, you ſhall not find a feather
" But in your kitchen; and for wine, 'tis gold—
" Not to be purchas'd—We may drink the ditches."

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*Apollodorus Gelous*, in the ſame period with the poets abovementioned, was a writer high

in fame, and author of many comedies, of all which the titles of eight only and ſome few fragments now remain: It is generally underſtood that the *Phormio* and *Hecrya* of *Terence* are copied from this poet. Very little has been preſerved from the wreck of this author's writings that can tempt me to a tranſlation; a few ſhort ſpecimens however, according to cuſtom are ſubmitted.—

" How ſweet were life, how placid and ſerene,
" Were others but as gentle as ourſelves:
" But if we muſt conſort with apes and monkies,
" We muſt be brutes like them—O life of ſorrow!"

---

" What do you truſt to, Father? To your money?
" Fortune indeed to thoſe, who have it not,
" Will ſometimes give it: but 'tis done in malice,
" Merely that ſhe may take it back again."

*Athenæus* has reſcued a little ſtroke of raillery, which is ludicrous enough—

" Go to! make faſt your gates with bars and bolts;
" But never chamber door was ſhut ſo cloſe,
" But cats and cuckold-makers wou'd creep thro' it."

The

The following has ſome point in it, but comes ill into tranſlation, or, more properly ſpeaking, is ill tranſlated—

" Youth and old age have their reſpective humours;
" And ſon by privilege can ſay to father,
" Were you not once as young as I am now?
" Not ſo the father; he cannot demand,
" Were you not once as old as I am now?"

There is ſomething pleaſing in the following natural deſcription of a friendly welcome—

" There is a certain hoſpitable air
" In a friend's houſe, that tells me I am welcome:
" The porter opens to me with a ſmile;
" The yard dog wags his tail, the ſervant runs,
" Beats up the cuſhion, ſpreads the couch, and ſays—
" Sit down, good Sir! e'er I can ſay I'm weary."

———

*Philippidas*, the ſon of *Philocles*, was another of this illuſtrious band of contemporary and rival authors: His extreme ſenſibility was the cauſe of his death, for the ſudden tranſport, occaſioned by the unex-

pected ſucceſs of one of his comedies, put a period to his life; the poet however was at this time very aged. Donatus informs us that Philippidas was in the higheſt favour with *Lyſimachus*, to whom he recommended himſelf not by the common modes of flattery, but by his amiable and virtuous qualities; the intereſt he had with Lyſimachus he ever employed to the moſt honourable purpoſes, and thereby diſpoſed him to confer many great and uſeful favours upon the people of Athens: So highly did his princely patron eſteem this venerable man, that whenever he ſet out upon any expedition, and chanced upon Philippidas in his way, he accounted it as the happieſt prognoſtic of good fortune.—"What is "there," ſaid Lyſimachus to him upon a certain occaſion, "which Philippidas would "wiſh I ſhould impart to him?"—"Any "thing," replied the poet, "but your "ſecrets."

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*Poſidippus*, with whom I ſhall conclude, was a Macedonian, born at Caſſandria, and the ſon of *Cyniſcus*. Abundant teſtimonies are

are to be found in the old grammarians of the celebrity of this poet; few fragments of his comedies have deſcended to us, and the titles only of twelve. He may be reckoned the laſt of the comic poets, as it was not till three years after the death of Menander that he began to write for the Athenian ſtage, and poſterior to him I know of no author, who has bequeathed even his name to poſterity: Here then concludes the hiſtory of the Greek ſtage; below this period it is in vain to ſearch for genius worth recording; Grecian literature and Grecian liberty expired together; a ſucceſſion of ſophiſts, pædagogues and grammarians filled the poſts of thoſe illuſtrious wits, whoſe ſpirit, foſtered by freedom, ſoared to ſuch heights as left the Roman poets little elſe except the ſecondary fame of imitation.

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I have now fulfilled what I may be allowed to call my literary engagements; in the courſe of which I have expended no ſmall pains and attention in dragging from obſcurity relicks buried in the rubbiſh of

the darker ages, when the whole world ſeemed to conſpire againſt Genius; when learning had degenerated into ſophiſm, and religion was made a theme of metaphyſical ſubtilty, ſerving, as it ſhould ſeem, no other purpoſe but to puzzle and confound, to inflame the paſſions and to perplex the head. Then it was, the fathers of the church, in whoſe hands theſe authors were, held it a point of conſcience to deſtroy the idols of the ſtage, as they had already deſtroyed the idols of the temple, and to bury heathen wit in the ſame grave with heathen ſuperſtition; their poets and their gods were to be exterminated alike. To the more enlightened taſte, or rather perhaps to the lucky partiality, of *Chryſoſtom* alone we owe the preſervation of *Ariſtophanes*. Continually engaged in argumentative and controverſial writings there were ſome, who occaſionally condeſcended to quote a paſſage, as it ſerved their purpoſe, from theſe proſcribed comedies, either to help out their wits or illuſtrate their meaning; and theſe ſcraps and ſplinters being ſwept together by ſome few patient collectors, who had charity enough

to

to work upon the wreck, poſterity hath been put into poſſeſſion of theſe gleanings of the comic ſtage of Athens in addition to the more entire and ineſtimable remains of *Ariſtophanes*. It has been my taſk (and I believe it is the firſt of the ſort attempted in our language) to avail myſelf of theſe friendly guides for making ſomething like a regular detail of the names, characters and productions of theſe loſt, but once illuſtrious, poets, and to give to the public ſuch as I conceive to be the beſt of their fragments in an Engliſh tranſlation. This part of my general undertaking being heavier than all the reſt to myelf, I was much afraid it would have proved ſo to my readers alſo; but their candid reception of theſe papers in particular, and the encouraging voice of my profeſt reviewers, have baniſhed that anxiety from my mind, and enabled me to proceed with chearfulneſs to the end.

There is one part however of theſe papers, in which I conceive I have been miſunderſtood as having carried my attack againſt the moral doctrines of Socrates, and of this

I am intereſted to exculpate myſelf; my ſubject led me to refer to certain anecdotes unfavourable to his private character, but I ſtudiouſly marked thoſe paſſages by obſerving that there was no deſign to glance at his moral doctrines, and at the ſame time quoted the authorities upon which thoſe anecdotes reſt; when any ſcholar will convince me that theſe were futile and malicious tales, I will retract all credit in them and thank him for the conviction: As for the purity of Socrates's doctrines I never attempted to impeach it; of the purity of his character I muſt continue to think there is much cauſe to doubt. The learned *Biſhop Sherlock* in his fourth diſcourſe may be referred to upon this ſubject: He there ſays *that the corrupt example of Socrates was a dead weight upon the purity of his doctrine, and tended to perpetuate ſuperſtition in the world.*— Though I am aware that the *corrupt example* here alluded to reſpects his religious practice, yet ſurely if the preacher of Chriſtianity was intereſted to ſhew the *corrupt example* of *Socrates* in this light, the friend of

of Chriſtianity may be allowed to repreſent it in another point of view, and by fair authorities to exhibit what the heathens themſelves have reported of this famous philoſopher, whoſe moral purity is by ſome taken merely upon truſt, by others deſignedly extolled to the ſkies for the ſake of oppoſing character to character, and by an audacious compariſon with Chriſt diſparaging the Divinity of the World's Redeemer. I ſhould expect then, that as far as truth and good authorities warrant, I am as free to diſcuſs the private vices and impurities of *Socrates*, as thoſe of *Mahomet*, which the learned prelate abovementioned moſt eloquently diſplays in his parallel between Chriſt and that Impoſtor: The Deiſt will perhaps be much intereſted to ſupport his favourite philoſopher, and will care little for the prophet: The modern Platoniſt, who is ingenious to erect a new ſyſtem of natural religion out of the ruins of heathen idolatry, may be zealous to defend the founder of his faith, and his anger I muſt ſubmit to incur; but it is not quite ſo eaſy to bear the reproof of friends, from whom

whom I have not deſerved it, and in whoſe ſervice I have drawn that anger upon myſelf.

As for my defence of *Ariſtophanes* againſt the groundleſs charge of having taken bribes from the enemies of *Socrates*, to attack him for the purpoſe of paving the way to his public trial, that I obſerve hath been on all hands admitted; for in truth the facts and dates on which it turns, cannot be conteſted; they are deciſive for his exculpation.

Eaſy as it has been to clear *Ariſtophanes* from the charge of conſpiring againſt the life of *Socrates*, he would be a hardy advocate, who ſhould attempt to defend his perſonal attack upon that philoſopher in his comedy of *The Clouds*. The outcry has been kept up for ſo many ages, that now to combat it would be a taſk indeed; there are ſo many, who join in it, without having examined into the merits of the caſe, and an appeal to the practice of the ſtage in thoſe times, as likewiſe to the comedy itſelf, would affect ſo few amongſt the many, who pretend to pronounce upon the offence, that the

the man, who undertook to ſoften general prejudices, muſt undertake to tranſlate *The Clouds*; and to transfuſe the original ſpirit of ſuch a compoſition into a modern language would be no eaſy work.

An attempt however to give my Engliſh readers ſome idea of this famous comedy will, I hope, be neither thought preſumptuous or diſpleaſing.

THE

# *THE CLOUDS*

OF

# ARISTOPHANES:

Acted at ATHENS in the second Year of Olymp. LXXXIX.

*AMINIAS being ARCHON.*

GRAIIS INGENIUM, GRAIIS DEDIT ORE ROTUNDO
MUSA LOQUI.

# DEDICATION

TO THE

# AUTHOR

OF THE

*Eſſay on the Principles of Tranſlation.*

SIR,

THE approbation, which you have been pleaſed to expreſs in your eſſay above named, of ſome fragments of the Greek comic poets, rendered into Engliſh by me, and inſerted in the volumes of *The Obſerver*, encourages me to preſent to you this ſpecimen of my humble endeavours upon a larger ſcale. It is a work of difficulty, and I probably ſhould not have had ſpirits to have reſumed the undertaking, and conducted it to the end, had not your very flattering opinion of my former attempts given me courage for the taſk. Aſpiring to deſerve your praiſe, as the teſt of my ſucceſs with the public, I have now compleated what I had only given a ſpecimen of in my *Obſerver*, *No.* 141, and beg leave to preſent you with an entire tranſlation of the comedy of *The Clouds*.

Having fully treated of this comedy and it's author, I have only to remark upon this occaſion, that there is little which I now wiſh to add, and nothing that I have ſince found reaſon to retract. I flatter myſelf that theſe eſſays contain as fair and as full a diſcuſſion of the ſubject as modern criticiſm can require, and that my remarks upon Ælian's charge are ſatisfactory for the purpoſe of confuting his calumny, and vindicating the character of Ariſtophanes from any colluſion with Anytus and Melitus, who did not bring Socrates to trial, till eighteen years at leaſt after this comedy was acted at Athens.

I do not pretend to juſtify the poet's motives for this perſonal attack upon Socrates and his ſchool, further than by refuting imputations, which are falſe upon the face of them. I think it is clear he was not ſuborned by bribes to the attack; and I further think that any curious enquirer, who will take a fair and candid review of the period, in which this ſatyrical drama was produced, will not fail to find very natural inducements for a comic poet to draw forth the weapons of his ridicule againſt the ſchools and academies then exiſting; and I do not ſcruple to add, even againſt that very ſchool in particular, which is here ſingled out as the object of contempt.

You will be pleaſed to take notice, that I call the motives *natural*; I do not go the length to ſay that they

they were juſt, or liberal, or ſuch as our more gentle manners can in this age approve.

The philoſophers in general, and Socrates in particular, had been adverſe to the comic ſtage; they had ſo far carried their point as to ſilence it, and kept the theatre ſhut during two years, whilſt it laid under proſcription by the archon Myrrichides. The unpopularity of this meaſure compelled the magiſtracy to open it again, when a powerful and exaſperated triumvirate of authors retook poſſeſſion of it, and all Athens flocked to the *Winter Amuſements* of Cratinus, the *New Moons* of Eupolis, and the *Acharnenſians* of our Ariſtophanes.

Can we wonder if theſe ingenious exiles made their perſecutors ſmart under the laſh of their wit and ridicule? It was *natural* at leaſt that a race ſo irritable ſhould retaliate upon their opponents, and avail themſelves of the triumph they had gained, and the intereſt they had eſtabliſhed with the people, who were to form their audiences. Of the three, Ariſtophanes was much the moſt moderate; this was remarked by Perſius many ages after; and Horace ſays, they were only then ſevere, *Si quis erat dignus deſcribi.*

Eupolis attacked the areopagite Autolycus in two ſeveral comedies, which he ſtamped with his name, and in which he perſonified him on the ſtage. He did the ſame by Alcibiades in his Baptæ, by

Cimon in his Lacedæmonians, and by the orator Hyperbolus in his Marica. Characters ſo popular, ſo conſpicuous and public as theſe, did not awe that daring poet. Cratinus did not fall ſhort of him, either in talents or in the bold uſe he made of them. In a few years after theſe events of expulſion and ſubſequent reſtoration, Ariſtophanes wrote his firſt comedy of the Clouds, and in the following year this ſecond of the ſame title, after the example of Eupolis, who obſerved the like periods in his firſt and ſecond Autolycus.

Whether the philoſophers were or were not fit objects of comic ſatire, muſt be left to your's and the reader's judgment; it is enough that war was declared between the poets and them, to make the conſequences *natural*, which reſulted from their animoſity.

To convince you that Ariſtophanes was not the ſingle champion of the comic corps, I muſt recal to your recollection the hoſtile proceedings of other leaders againſt the common enemy. Alexis made the life and actions of that impoſtor Pythagoras the foundation of an entire comedy; he alſo handled Plato very roughly in no leſs than four ſeveral dramas, notwithſtanding the partiality of that philoſopher, who wrote *love* epigrams upon him without ſoftening his rancour, or receiving one kind ſmile in return.

Anaxan-

Anaxandrides was another wicked wit, who not only vented his gall upon the divine Plato and the Academy, but alſo attacked the magiſtracy of Athens, who reſented the ſatire ſo deeply, as to bring him to trial, and by one of the moſt cruel ſentences upon record condemned him to be ſtarved to death.

It was Plato's hard fate to fall under the laſh of Epicrates alſo, who in one of his plays ridiculed the frivolous diſquiſitions of the Academy with great comic humour. Pythagoras again came under the ſtroke of Ariſtophon, who rallied him on his juggling tricks with great ſucceſs.

Heniochus the comic poet brought Thorucion, a contemporary, to the dramatic halbert, and exhibited his character on the ſtage in a play, which he called after his name.

Plato, a poet of the ſame department, wrote a perſonal comedy againſt Cleophon the general. Pherecrates laſhed Alcibiades, and Hermippus lampooned Pericles. But Amipſias, a contemporary of Ariſtophanes, wrote a comedy intitled, The Philoſopher's Cloak, and was ſo audacious as to ſet up Socrates himſelf for the butt of his ridicule.

You ſee, therefore, that our author was not alone in his hoſtility againſt Socrates: the ſchools were in their turn ſilenced by authority, and ſome are hardy enough to ſay, that it would have been happy for the

ſtate, had they never again been ſuffered to teach. The Lacedæmonians were of that opinion, and took firm meaſures to prevent their ſettling amongſt them: they did not ſeem to think any good end could be derived from their ſyſtem of education; they had no opinion of that ingenious logic, which *could make the worſe appear the better reaſon*; and they were anxious to preſerve their native ſimple character from contamination: I am inclined to believe they were wiſer in their generation than the people of Athens: certain it is, that this city was, in point of morals, extremely diſſolute at the period when this comedy was acted, and yet it was then thronged with philoſophers.

The unbounded applauſe beſtowed upon the author of *The Clouds*, and the unanimous decree in his favour, above all his competitors, ſeem to beſpeak no very partial diſpoſition in his audience towards the objects of his ridicule; whatever might have been the merit of his comedy in point of wit, had there been abſolutely no foundation for his ſatire, but mere rancour and malice, the attack would have been too barefaced to be endured; and had Ariſtophanes been ſuborned by Anytus and Melitus, as Ælian ſuggeſts, is it to be ſuppoſed they would not have ſeized the favourable moment of his triumph to have puſhed their ſuit againſt Socrates? I think therefore, without affecting to juſtify the perſonality of the piece, we may

may fairly preſume that the author was no otherwiſe actuated than by the ſpirit of the corps for raillery and retaliation, and having, like his brother poets, reſolved upon turning out againſt the philoſophers, he boldly took his aim at the moſt illuſtrious champion of their order.

I am now to ſolicit your favourable peruſal of my performance, which I doubt not but you will read with all candid allowances for the many difficulties I have had to ſurmount, of all which you are ſo perfect a judge. I flatter myſelf you will find it faithful to the original, and as cloſe as the languages can be made to approach, without violating the harmony of the metre, or that free air of originality, which every tranſlator ſhould make it his endeavour to preſerve; in ſhort, if you ſhall perceive that I have been duely attentive to your own admirable rules, which it has been my earneſt ſtudy to purſue, I ſhall eſteem it the moſt flattering preſage of ſucceſs with the reſt of my readers.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your much obliged,

and moſt obedient ſervant,

*Richard Cumberland.*

## Dramatis Perſonæ.

STREPSIADES.
PHIDIPPIDES.
SERVANT *to* STREPSIADES.
DISCIPLES *of* SOCRATES.
SOCRATES.
CHORUS *of* CLOUDS.
DICÆUS, *or the* JUST Character.
ADICUS, *or the* UNJUST.
PASIAS.
AMYNIAS.
WITNESSES.
CHÆREPHON.

SCENE, *ATHENS.*

# THE CLOUDS

OF

# ARISTOPHANES.

(Strepſiades *is diſcovered in his chamber*, Phidippides *ſleeping in his bed. Time, before break of day.)*

STREPSIADES.

Ah me, ah me! will this night never end?
Oh kingly Jove, ſhall there be no more day?
And yet the cock ſung out long time ago;
I heard him—but my people lie and ſnore,
Snore in defiance, for the raſcals know
It is their [1] privilege in time of war,
Which with it's other plagues brings this upon us,
That we mayn't rouſe theſe vermin with a cudgel.
There's my young hopeful too, he ſleeps it through,
Snug under five fat blankets at the leaſt.
Would I could ſleep ſo ſound! but my poor eyes
Have no ſleep in them; what with debts and duns

[1] The Athenians had granted them certain exemptions for their ſervices on board the fleet in the Lacedæmonian war.

And ſtable-keepers bills, which this fine ſpark
Heaps on my back, I lie awake the whilſt:
And what cares he but to coil up his locks,
Ride, drive his horſes, dream of 'em all night,
Whilſt I, poor devil, may go hang—for now
[2] The moon in her laſt quarter wains apace,
And my uſurious creditors are gaping.
What hoa! a light! bring me my tablets, boy!
That I may ſet down all, and ſum them up,
Debts, creditors, and intereſt upon intereſt—
*(Boy enters with a light and tablets.)*
Let me ſee where I am and what the total—
[3] Twelve pounds to Paſias—Hah! to Paſias twelve!
Out on it, and for what? A horſe forſooth,
[4] Right noble by the mark—Curſe on ſuch marks!
Wou'd I had giv'n this eye from out this head,
Ere I had paid the purchaſe of this jennet!

PHIDIPPIDES.

Shame on you, Philo!—Keep within your ring.

[2] The term for enforcing payments and taking out execution againſt debtors, according to uſage, was in near approach.

[3] The Athenian pound was of the value of one hundred drachmas, and each drachm of ſix oboli. The pound may be computed at three of our's, which gives the price of the horſe about £. 36.

[4] In the original the mark is pointed out to have been that of the *koppa*, whence theſe horſes were called *koppatiæ*, as thoſe ſtamped with the *ſigma* were named *ſamphoræ*. The *bucephali* had the mark of the ox's head, and probably Alexander's favourite charger was of this ſort.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

There 'tis! that's it! the bane of all my peace—
He's racing in his ſleep.

PHIDIPPIDES.

A heat—a heat!
How many turns to a heat?

STREPSIADES.

More than enough;
You've giv'n me turns in plenty—I am jaded.
But to my liſt—What name ſtands next to Paſias?
[5] Amynias—three good pounds—ſtill for the race—
[6] A chariot mounted on it's wheels compleat.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Diſmount! unharneſs and away!

STREPSIADES.

I thank you;
You have unharneſs'd me: I am diſmounted,
And with a vengeance—All my goods in pawn,
Fines, forfeitures, and penalties in plenty.

[5] Aminias was the archon when this comedy was acted, and the poet makes uſe of his name in the way of ridicule, ſpelling it however *Amynias* inſtead of Aminias. At length the perſons of the archons were, by a ſpecial law, protected from ridicule and detraction.

[6] The chariot or curricle here alluded to was built extremely light, with a ſeat for the driver, and wheels of a ſtated conſtruction, for the race. The price annexed to it beſpeaks it to have been of ſlight and ſimple workmanſhip.

PHIDIPPIDES.

PHIDIPPIDES. *(wakes.)*

My father! why ſo reſtleſs? who has vex'd you?

STREPSIADES.

[7] The ſheriff vexes me; he breaks my reſt.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Peace, ſelf-tormentor, let me ſleep!

STREPSIADES.

Sleep on!
But take this with you; all theſe debts of mine
Will double on your head: A plague confound
That curſed match-maker, who drew me in
To wed, forſooth, that precious dam of thine.
I liv'd at eaſe in the country, coarſely clad,
Rough, free, and full withal as oil and honey
And ſtore of ſtock could fill me, till I took,
Clown as I was, this limb of the [8] Alcmæon's,
This vain, extravagant, high-blooded dame:
Rare bed-fellows and dainty—were we not?
I, ſmelling of the wine-vat, figs and fleeces,
The produce of my farm, [9] all eſſence ſhe,
Saffron

[7] The Athenian *demarchus*, here rendered *ſheriff*, had, amongſt many popular concerns, the cuſtody of all goods pledged to creditors.

[8] Strepſiades ſays he married his wife out of the family of Megacles, deſcended from Alcmæon, and one of the firſt nobility in Athens.

[9] This is one of many paſſages in this author, where the language of tranſlation cannot be made to embrace the full ſpirit of the

Saffron and harlot's kiſſes, paint and waſhes,
A pamper'd wanton—Idle I'll not call her;
She took due pains in faith to work my ruin,
Which made me tell her, pointing to this cloak,
Now thread-bare on my ſhoulders—ſee, good wife,
This is your work—in troth you toil too hard.

*(Boy re-enters.)*

Maſter, the lamp has drank up all it's oil.

STREPSIADES.

Aye, tis a drunken lamp; the more fault your's;
Whelp, you ſhall howl for this.

BOY.

Why? for what fault?

STREPSIADES.

For cramming ſuch a greedy wick with oil.

*(Exit Boy.)*

Well! in good time this hopeful heir was born;
Then I and my beloved fell to wrangling
About the naming of the brat—My wife

the original. Strepſiades, deſcribing the character of his wife as contraſted with himſelf, ſays (in the phraſe of Eretria) that ſhe was Ἐγκεκοισυρωμένην, laviſh in the ornaments of her perſon as Cæſyra, *made up* by all the artifice of the toilette, (or in one word *Cæſyrafied.)* There were two ladies of this name, one the wife of Alcmæon, the other of Piſiſtratus, and as Strepſiades has already placed his wife in the family of the former, it ſeems moſt likely that his ridicule points at the elder Cæſyra, though both were examples equally appoſite.

Would dub her colt [10] Xanthippus or Charippus,
Or it might be Callipides, ſhe car'd not
So 'twere a horſe, which ſhar'd the name—but I
Stuck for his grand-father Phidonides;
At laſt when neither could prevail, the matter
Was compromis'd by calling him Phidippides:
Then ſhe began to fondle her ſweet babe,
And taking him by th' hand—lambkin, ſhe cried,
When thou art ſome years older thou ſhalt drive,
Megacles-like, thy chariot to the city,
Rob'd in a ſaffron mantle—No, quoth I,
Not ſo, my boy, but thou ſhalt drive thy goats,
When thou art able, from the fields of [11] Phelle,
Clad in a woollen jacket like thy father:
But he is deaf to all theſe frugal rules,
And drives me on the gallop to my ruin;
Therefore all night I call my thoughts to council,
And after long debate find one chance left,
To which if I can lead him all is ſafe,
If not—but ſoft? 'tis time that I ſhould wake him.

[10] In all theſe names of the wife's propoſing ſhe keeps her own family in view. Xanthippus and Charippus are proper names; the firſt was the father of Pericles: Callias was an Olympic victor, and that ſhe ingeniouſly compounds. The name Phidonides, which Strepſiades contends for, is a compounded term, that implies a *man addicted to parſimony*; the compromiſe therefore for Phidippides is ſo contrived as to ſuit both parties.

[11] A rocky diſtrict of Attica, which afforded paſturage only to goats.

But

But how to ſoothe him to the taſk—Phidippides!
Precious Phidippides!

PHIDIPPIDES.

What now, my father?

STREPSIADES.

Kiſs me, my boy! reach me thine hand—

PHIDIPPIDES.

Declare,
What wou'd you?

STREPSIADES.

Doſt thou love me, ſirrah? ſpeak!

PHIDIPPIDES.

Aye, by equeſtrian Neptune!

STREPSIADES.

Name not him,
Name not that charioteer; he is my bane,
The ſource of all my ſorrow—but, my ſon,
If thou doſt love me, prove it by obedience.

PHIDIPPIDES.

In what muſt I obey.

STREPSIADES.

Reform your habits;
Quit them at once, and what I ſhall preſcribe
That do!

PHIDIPPIDES.

And what is it that you preſcribe?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

But wilt thou do't?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Yea,[12] by Dionyſus!

STREPSIADES.

'Tis well: get up! come hither, boy; look out!
Yon little wicket and the hut hard by—
Do'ſt ſee them?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Clearly. What of that ſame hut?

STREPSIADES.

Why that's the council-chamber of all wiſdom:
There the choice ſpirits dwell, who teach the world
That heav'n's great concave is one mighty oven,
And men it's burning embers: theſe are they,
[13] Who can ſhew pleaders how to twiſt a cauſe,
So you'll but pay them for it, right or wrong.

PHIDIPPIDES.

[12] The poet is duely attentive to character in theſe aſſeverations, which he puts into the mouth of his young man, making him firſt ſwear by *equeſtrian Neptune*, and when driven from that reſorting to Dionyſus, the patron of the feaſt now in actual celebration, called the Dionyſia: this was alſo the more appoſite, as it was now this very comedy was in repreſentation. I have therefore accorded to the original term, in preference to that of Bacchus, which Brunck and other tranſlators have adopted.

[13] How cunningly the poet ſlides in his ſatire before he betrays the perſonality attached to it! He expoſes the doctrines before he gives the names of theſe philoſophers, and thoſe doctrines he deſcribes

PHIDIPPIDES.

And how do you call them?

STREPSIADES.

[14] Troth I know not that,
But they are men, who take a world of pains;
Wondrous good men and able.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Out upon 'em!
Poor rogues, I know them now; you mean thoſe ſcabs,
Thoſe ſqualid, barefoot, beggarly impoſtors,
The mighty cacodæmons of whoſe ſect
Are [15] Socrates and Chærephon. Away!

STREPSIADES.

deſcribes to be of that ſpecies of ſophiſtry, by which men are taught to evade the laws, and defraud their creditors, than which there cannot well be any greater offence againſt ſociety.

[14] It is worth a remark, that to this queſtion of the ſon, the ruſtic father pleads ignorance, by which the poet artfully transfers the firſt naming of Socrates and Chærephon from that perſon, who muſt have ſpoken of them reſpectfully to him, who now announces them to the audience with all the contempt and obloquy peculiar to his character. This is one amongſt many inſtances of the poet's addreſs, which the critic cannot fail to diſcover in this opening ſcene.

[15] Had it happily ſo chanced, that the firſt comedy of *The Clouds* had been preſerved, it would have been a moſt gratifying circumſtance to have traced the author's contrivances for turning his experience of a paſt miſcarriage to account in a ſecond attempt. I think it highly probable that this of coupling Chærephon with Socrates was one of his expedients to avoid the ſhock of bringing him too abruptly before the audience; and though

no

STREPSIADES.

Huſh, huſh! be ſtill; don't vent ſuch fooliſh prattle;
But if you'll take my counſel, join their college
And quit your riding ſchool.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Not I, ſo help me
Dionyſus our patron! though you brib'd me
With all the racers that Leogarus
Breeds from his [16] Phaſian ſtud.

STREPSIADES.

Dear, darling lad,
Prythee be rul'd, and learn.

PHIDIPPIDES.

What ſhall I learn?

no management might ſerve for bringing over his determined ſupporters, yet by grounding his attack upon the principles of univerſal juſtice, and claſſing him with an aſſociate ſo contemptible as Chærephon, nicknamed the Bat, he takes the likelieſt means of intereſting the audience in general for his comedy.

[16] Whether the φασιανὸι are to be underſtood literally as pheaſants, or as horſes ſo deſcribed, is a diſputed point with the grammarians. Leogarus was famous for his breed of horſes; he was alſo a notorious glutton; his character of courſe accords to each interpretation. I have inclin'd to the latter, as thinking it more in character of the ſpeaker, and as I find the country on the banks of the Phaſis celebrated for it's breed of horſes, I prefer that conſtruction to any other.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

They have a choice of logic; [17] this for juſtice,
That for injuſtice: learn that latter art,
And all theſe creditors, that now beſet me,
Shall never touch a drachm that I owe them.

PHIDIPPIDES.

I'll learn of no ſuch maſters, nor be made
A ſcare-crow and a may-game to my comrades:
I have no zeal for ſtarving.

STREPSIADES.

No, nor I
For feaſting you and your fine pamper'd cattle
At free coſt any longer—Horſe and foot
To the crows I bequeath you. So be gone.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Well, ſir, I have an uncle rich and noble;
Megacles will not let me be unhors'd;
To him I go: I'll trouble you no longer *. *(Exit.)*

STREPSIADES

[17] The great aim of this comedy is to hold up to ridicule and deteſtation that Socratic mode of arguing by quirk and quibble, which is here term'd the unjuſt, and elſewhere the new ſophiſtry. As this will be brought into full diſcuſſion in a ſubſequent ſcene, I ſhall poſtpone any further remarks for the preſent.

* The poet in this opening ſcene exhibits a conſiderable ſhare of dramatic ſkill and contrivance: It developes juſt as much of the fable, as is proper for the audience to be apprized of, and prepares them for the introduction of the principal character after a very artful manner. The intervention of the ſervant boy, firſt with

STREPSIADES *alone.*

He has thrown me to the ground, but I'll not lie there;
I'll up, and with permiſſion of the gods
Try if I cannot learn theſe arts myſelf:
But being old, ſluggiſh, and dull of wit,
How am I ſure theſe ſubtleties won't poſe me?

with the tablets, and next with his report of the lamp, together with the ſpeakings of Phidippides in his ſleep, are pleaſantly and ingeniouſly thrown in to break the ſoliloquies of the old man, whoſe ſtory, though humorouſly told, would elſe be too long in detail. The part, which the ſon holds in the ſcene, is alſo very characteriſtic, and his ſallies in his dream (in which the author ſeems to have Æſchylus in his eye) have a great deal of point and ſtage effect. The ſame may be remarked of the art obſerved in introducing the firſt mention of Socrates and his ſchool, and the explanation Strepſiades gives of the purpoſes for which he would have his ſon reſort thither. The baſe nature of thoſe purpoſes and the abhorrence of the young man are cunning preparatives for the introduction of Socrates, and for biaſſing the ſpectators in favour of the perſonal attack, which the poet is now meditating againſt that eminent philoſopher. The attempt was daring, and had once already failed; warned by this miſcarriage he now lays his plan with more precaution, and it is not eaſy to conceive any better generalſhip than he diſplays upon this ſecond attack. If there is any thing in this ſcene open to critical reprehenſion, I conceive it to be that the ſpeakings of Strepſiades are of a higher caſt here than in his ſucceeding dialogues with Socrates, where the poet (for the ſake no doubt of contraſting his ruſticity with the fineſſe of the philoſopher) has lowered him to the ſtile and ſentiment of an arrant clown. Of this the reader will be able to judge as he advances; but I dare ſay the humour of the dialogue will atone for any ſmall departure from uniformity of character, if any ſuch in fact does exiſt.

Well!

Well! I'll attempt it: what avails complaint?
Why don't I knock and enter?—Hoa! within there!—
*(Knocks violently at the door; a diſciple calls out from within.)*

DISCIPLE.

Go hang yourſelf! and give the crows a dinner—
What noiſy fellow art thou at the door?

STREPSIADES.

Strepſiades of [18] Cicynna, ſon of Phidon.

DISCIPLE.

Whoe'er thou art, 'fore Heaven, thou art a fool
Not to reſpect theſe doors; battering ſo loud,
And kicking with ſuch vengeance, you have marr'd
The ripe conception of my pregnant brain,
And brought on a miſcarriage.

STREPSIADES.

Oh! the pity—
Pardon my ignorance: I'm country bred
And far a-field am come: I pray you tell me
What curious thought my luckleſs din has ſtrangled,
Juſt as your brain was hatching.

DISCIPLE.

Theſe are things
We never ſpeak of but amongſt ourſelves.

STREPSIADES.

Speak boldly then to me, for I am come

[18] A citizen of the tribe of Acamas.

To

To be amongſt you, and partake the ſecrets
Of your profound academy.

DISCIPLE.

Enough!
I will impart, but ſet it down in thought
Amongſt our myſteries—This is the queſtion,
As it was put but now to Chærephon,
By our great maſter Socrates, to anſwer—
How many of his own lengths at one ſpring
A flea can hop—for we did ſee one vault
From [19] Chærephon's black eye-brow to the head
Of the philoſopher.

STREPSIADES.

And how did t'other
Contrive to meaſure this?

DISCIPLE.

Moſt accurately:
He dipt the inſect's feet in melted wax,
Which, hard'ning into ſandals as it cool'd,
Gave him the ſpace by rule infallible.

STREPSIADES.

Imperial Jove! what ſubtilty of thought!

DISCIPLE.

But there's a deeper queſtion yet behind;
What wou'd you ſay to that?

[19] Chærephon was ſwarthy, and on that account, as well as for his ſhrill and querulous ſpeech, nicknam'd *the Bat*. Socrates was bald.

STREPSIADES.

I pray, impart it.

DISCIPLE.

'Twas put to Socrates, if he could ſay,
When a gnat hum'd, whether the ſound did iſſue
From mouth or tail.

STREPSIADES.

Aye; marry, what ſaid he?

DISCIPLE.

He ſaid your gnat doth blow his trumpet backwards
From a ſonorous cavity within him,
Which being fill'd with breath, and forc'd along
The narrow pipe or rectum of his body,
Doth vent itſelf in a loud hum behind.

STREPSIADES.

Hah! then I ſee the podex of your gnat
Is trumpet faſhion'd—Oh! the bleſſings on him
For this diſcovery; well may he eſcape
[20] The law's ſtrict ſcrutiny, who thus developes
The anatomy of a gnat.

DISCIPLE.

Nor is this all;
Another grand experiment was blaſted
By a curſt cat.

[20] The dramatic critic will ſee the point of this inference, and give the poet credit for it.

STREPSIADES.

As how, good ſir; diſcuſs?

DISCIPLE.

One night as he was gazing at the moon,
Curious and all intent upon her motions,
A cat on the houſe ridge was at her needs,
And ſquirted in his face.

STREPSIADES.

Beſhrew her for it!
Yet I muſt laugh no leſs to think a cat
Shou'd ſo beſpatter Socrates.

DISCIPLE.

Laſt night
We were bilk'd of our ſupper.

STREPSIADES.

Were you ſo?
What did your maſter ſubſtitute inſtead?

DISCIPLE.

Why to ſay truth, he ſprinkled a few aſhes
Upon the board, then with a little broach,
Crook'd for the nonce, pretending to deſcribe
A circle, neatly filch'd away a cloak.

STREPSIADES.

Why talk we then of [21] Thales? Open to me,

Open

[21] It was a cuſtom with Ariſtophanes to call a man, who was devoted to aſtronomical ſtudies *a Thales*. We are therefore to underſtand

[22] Open the ſchool and let me ſee your maſter:
I am on fire to enter—Come, unbar!
*(The School is diſcloſed.)*
O Hercules, defend me! who are theſe?
What kind of cattle have we here in view?

DISCIPLE.

Where is the wonder? What do they reſemble?

STREPSIADES.

Methinks they're like our Spartan priſoners,

underſtand that Socrates is repreſented as engaging the attention of his pupils by ſome aſtronomical ſchemes, traced out on the table, whilſt he took the opportunity of purloining a cloak. This would have been a very dangerous joke for the poet to have riſqued, if ſome ſuch idle ſtories had not been in circulation; but this was the caſe, and other authors are quoted as having made the ſame charge.

[22] Ariſtophanes well knew how impoſſible it was for the friends of Socrates to ſtem the laugh of a theatre; he perfectly underſtood the uſe of that weapon, which in his hands was ſo formidable, and devotes the whole preceding ſcene to ridicule of that farcical kind, which was ſo well adapted to the falſe taſte of the Athenians, to whom even the groſſeſt buffooneries were acceptable. Having therefore in his firſt ſcene ſet out by ſtating the iniquitous ſophiſtry of the Socratic ſchool, he next proceeds to ridicule their frivolous enquiries and experiments, and with this view introduces a diſciple, who with much ſolemnity is made to betray the ſecrets of his maſter, and to tell ſuch tales to the diſgrace of his philoſophy, and even of his honeſty, as are calculated, with the aid of the old man's comments, to raiſe a laugh againſt Socrates, juſt in the moment, when he is prepared to open the ſcene of his academy, and exhibit his perſon in the moſt ridiculous attitude his fancy could deviſe.

Captur'd at Pylos. What are they in ſearch of?
Why are their eyes ſo rivetted to th' earth?

DISCIPLE.

There their reſearches center.

STREPSIADES.

[23] 'Tis for onions
They are in queſt—Come, lads, give o'er your ſearch;
I'll ſhew you what you want, a noble plat,
All round and ſound—but ſoft! what mean thoſe gentry,
Who dip their heads ſo low?

DISCIPLE.

Marry, becauſe
Their ſtudies lead that way: They are now diving
To the dark realms of Tartarus and Night.

STREPSIADES.

But why are all their cruppers mounted up?

DISCIPLE.

To practiſe them in ſtar-gazing, and teach them
Their proper elevations—but no more:
Come, fellow-ſtudents, let us hence, or ere
The maſter comes—

STREPSIADES.

Nay, prythee let 'em ſtay
And be of council with me in my buſineſs.

[23] He had before ſaid they were like the Lacedæmonian priſoners, emaciated and half ſtarved, he therefore ſuppoſes them on the ſearch for food and not for ſcience.

DISCIPLE.

DISCIPLE.

Impoſſible; they cannot give the time.

STREPSIADES.

Now for the love of Heav'n, what have we here?
Explain their uſes to me. *(obſerving the apparatus.)*

DISCIPLE.

This machine
Is for aſtronomy—

STREPSIADES.

And this?

DISCIPLE.

For geometry.

STREPSIADES.

As how?

DISCIPLE.

For meaſuring the earth.

STREPSIADES.

Indeed!
What by the lot?

DISCIPLE.

No, faith, Sir, by the lump;
Ev'n the whole globe at once.

STREPSIADES.

Well ſaid, in troth.
A quaint device and made for general uſe.

DISCIPLE.

Look now, this line marks the circumference
Of the whole earth, d'ye ſee—This ſpot is Athens—

STREPSIADES.

Athens! go to, [24] I ſee no courts are ſitting;
Therefore I can't believe you.

DISCIPLE.

Nay, in truth
This very tract is Attica.

STREPSIADES.

And where,
Where is my own Cicynna?

DISCIPLE.

Here it lies:
And this Eubœa—Mark! how far it runs—

STREPSIADES.

How far it runs! Yes, Pericles has made it
Run far enough from us—Where's Lacedæmon?

DISCIPLE.

Here; cloſe to Athens,

STREPSIADES.

Ah! how much too cloſe—
Prythee, good friends, take that bad neighbour from us.

[24] This is the ſame ſort of reproach, which Demoſthenes afterwards made uſe of. Their character in ſhort was frivolous, and their caprice unpardonable. This whole ſcene is raillery of a ſerious ſort, and in this place, where it was ſo much his intereſt to keep up the laugh, unſuitably applied.

DISCIPLE.

DISCIPLE.

That's not for us to do.

STREPSIADES.

The worſe luck your's!
But look! who's this ſuſpended in a [25] baſket?
*(Socrates is diſcovered.)*

DISCIPLE.

This, this is he.

STREPSIADES.

What he?

DISCIPLE.

Why, Socrates.

STREPSIADES.

Hah! Socrates?—Make up to him and roar,
Bid him come down; roar luſtily.

DISCIPLE.

Not I:
Do it yourſelf; I've other things to mind. *(exit.)*

STREPSIADES.

Hoa! Socrates—What hoa, my little Socrates!—

[25] It is clear that the philoſopher does not remain ſuſpended in his baſket during the preceding ſcene, becauſe the diſciple warns away his fellow ſtudents, leſt their maſter ſhould diſcover them. If the poet had ſpared his politics about Eubœa and Lacedæmon, I ſhould conceive his audience might have been in a better humour for receiving an incident of ſo ſingular and daring a ſort, as the debût of the philoſopher in a baſket; but no doubt he knew the people he had to deal with.

SOCRATES.

[26] Mortal, how now! Thou inſect of a day,
What wou'd'ſt thou?

STREPSIADES.

I wou'd know what thou art doing.

SOCRATES.

I tread in air, contemplating the ſun.

STREPSIADES.

Ah, then I ſee you're baſketed ſo high,
That you look down upon the Gods—Good hope,
You'll lower a peg on earth.

SOCRATES.

Sublime in air,
Sublime in thought I carry my mind with me,
It's cogitations all aſſimilated
To the pure atmoſphere, in which I float;
Lower me to earth, and my mind's ſubtle powers,
Seiz'd by contagious dulneſs, loſe their ſpirit;
For the dry earth drinks up the generous ſap,
The vegetating vigor of philoſophy,
And leaves it a mere huſk.

STREPSIADES.

What do you ſay?
Philoſophy has ſapt your vigor? Fie upon it.

[26] To give the philoſopher a mock ſublimity, he elevates him above the heads of his fellow creatures by the vehicle of a baſket, and then makes him ſpeak in a ſtile correſpondent to the loftineſs of his ſtation, a language ſuited to the character of a demigod.

But

But come, my precious fellow, come down quickly,
And teach me thoſe fine things I'm here in queſt of.

SOCRATES.

And what fine things are they?

STREPSIADES.

A new receipt
For ſending off my creditors, and foiling them
By the art logical; for you ſhall know
By debts, pawns, pledges, uſuries, executions
I am rackt and rent in tatters.

SOCRATES.

Why permit it?
What ſtrange infatuation ſeiz'd your ſenſes?

STREPSIADES.

The horſe conſumption, a devouring plague;
But ſo you'll enter me amongſt your ſcholars,
Aud tutor me like them to bilk my creditors,
Name your own price, and by the Gods I ſwear
I'll pay you the laſt drachm.

SOCRATES.

By what Gods?
Anſwer that firſt; for your Gods are not mine.

STREPSIADES.

[27] How ſwear you then? As the Byzantians ſwear
By their baſe iron coin?

SOCRATES.

[27] This whole dialogue, between two characters ſo forcibly contraſted, is conceived in the very beſt ſtile of the author. That

SOCRATES.

Art thou ambitious
To be inſtructed in celeſtial matters,
And taught to know them clearly?

STREPSIADES.

Marry am I,
So they be to my purpoſe, and celeſtial.

SOCRATES.

What, if I bring you to a conference
With my own proper Goddeſſes, the Clouds?

STREPSIADES.

'Tis what I wiſh devoutly.

SOCRATES.

Come, ſit down;
Repoſe yourſelf upon this couch.

this eminent philoſopher was not an orthodox heathen, may well be believed; that the poet himſelf was not leſs of a free thinker, may fairly be inferred from a variety of paſſages in his ſurviving comedies, where the Deities and even Jupiter himſelf are treated with ſo little ceremony, or rather with ſuch ſovereign contempt, that we muſt ſuppoſe no danger was attached to the avowal of theſe free opinions, and of courſe no ſerious deſign to entrap the life of Socrates by this raillery could be in the contemplation of Ariſtophanes at the time. It ſeems to be nothing more than a mere vehicle for introducing his chorus of fanciful beings, in like manner with thoſe of his *frogs*, *birds*, and *waſps*, which are all caſt in the ſame whimſical characters with this of *The Clouds*. It is however a very appoſite alluſion of the clown, when he aſks him if he ſwears, as the Byzantians do, by the beggarly oath of their own baſe coining.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

'Tis done.

SOCRATES.

Now take this chaplet—wear it.

STREPSIADES.

Why this chaplet?
Wou'd'ſt make of me another [28] Athamas,
And ſacrifice me to a cloud?

SOCRATES.

Fear nothing;
It is a ceremony indiſpenſible
At all initiations.

STREPSIADES.

What to gain?

SOCRATES.

T'will ſift your faculties as fine as powder,
Bolt 'em like meal, grind 'em as light as duſt;
Only be patient.

STREPSIADES.

Marry, you'll go near
To make your words good; an' you pound me thus
You'll make me very duſt and nothing elſe.

SOCRATES. *(Anapeſts.)*

Keep ſilence then, and liſten to a prayer,
Which fits the gravity of age to hear—

[28] Reſcued by Hercules, when on the point of being immolated to the manes of Phryxus.

Oh! Air, all powerful Air, which doſt enfold
This pendant globe, thou vault of flaming gold,
Ye ſacred Clouds, who bid the thunder roll,
Shine forth, approach, and cheer your ſuppliant's ſoul!

STREPSIADES.

Hold, keep 'em off awhile, till I am ready.
Ah! luckleſs me, wou'd I had brought my bonnet,
And ſo eſcap'd a ſoaking.

SOCRATES.

Come, come away!
Fly ſwift, ye clouds, and give yourſelves to view!
Whether on high Olympus' ſacred top
Snow-crown'd ye ſit, or in the azure vales
Of your own father Ocean ſporting weave
Your miſty dance, or dip your golden urns
In the ſeven mouths of Nile; whether ye dwell
On Thracian Mimas, or Mœotis' lake,
Hear me, yet hear, and thus invok'd approach!

CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

Aſcend, ye watery Clouds, on high,
Daughters of Ocean, climb the ſky,
And o'er the mountain's pine-cap't brow
Towering your fleecy mantle throw:
Thence let us ſcan the wide-ſtretch'd ſcene,
Groves, lawns, and rilling ſtreams between,

And ſtormy Neptune's vaſt expanſe,
And graſp all nature at a glance.
Now the dark tempeſt flits away,
And lo! the glittering orb of day
Darts forth his clear etherial beam,
Come let us ſnatch the joyous gleam.

SOCRATES.

Yes, ye Divinities, whom I adore,
I hail you now propitious to my prayer.
[29] Did'ſt thou not hear them ſpeak in thunder to me?

STREPSIADES.

And I too am your Cloudſhips moſt obedient
And under ſufferance trump againſt your thunder:
Nay, take it how you may, my frights and fears
Have pinch'd and cholick'd my poor bowels ſo,
That I can't chuſe but treat your holy noſtrils
With an unſavoury ſacrifice.

SOCRATES.

Forbear
Theſe groſs ſcurrilities, for low buffoons
And mountebanks more fitting. Huſh! be ſtill,
Liſt to the chorus of their heavenly voices,
For muſic is the language they delight in.

[29] After Socrates has performed his ſolemn incantation, the Clouds give ſign of their approach by thunder, and, that ceaſing, they chant their lyric ode in the ſtile of Archilochus, as they are ſuppoſed to be deſcending towards the earth, and as yet out of ſight. The effect of this was probably very ſtriking.

CHORUS

CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

Ye Clouds, replete with fruitful ſhowers,
Here let us ſeek Minerva's towers,
The cradle of old Cecrops' race,
The world's chief ornament and grace;
Here myſtic fanes and rites divine
And lamps in ſacred ſplendor ſhine;
Here the Gods dwell in marble domes,
Feaſted with coſtly hecatombs,
That round their votive ſtatues blaze,
Whilſt crowded temples ring with praiſe;
And pompous ſacrifices here
Make holidays thoughout the year,
And when gay ſpring-time comes again,
Bromius convokes his ſportive train,
And pipe and ſong and choral dance
Hail the ſoft hours as they advance.

STREPSIADES.

Now in the name of Jove I pray thee tell me
Who are theſe ranting dames, that talk in ſtilts?
Of the Amazonian caſt no doubt.

SOCRATES.

Not ſo,
No dames, but clouds celeſtial, friendly powers
To men of ſluggiſh parts; from theſe we draw
Senſe, apprehenſion, volubility,
Wit to confute, and cunning to enſnare.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Aye, therefore t'was that my heart leapt within me
For very ſympathy when firſt I heard 'em:
Now I could prattle ſhrewdly of firſt cauſes,
And ſpin out metaphyſic cobwebs finely,
And dogmatize moſt rarely, and diſpute
And paradox it with the beſt of you:
So, come what may, I muſt and will behold 'em;
Shew me their faces I conjure you.

SOCRATES.

Look,
Look towards Mount Parnes as I point—There, there!
Now they deſcend the hill; I ſee them plainly
As plain can be.

STREPSIADES.

Where, where? I prythee, ſhew me.

SOCRATES.

Here! a whole troop of them thro' woods and hollows,
A bye-way of their own.

STREPSIADES.

What ails my eyes,
That I can't catch a glimpſe of them?

SOCRATES.

Behold!
Here at the very entrance—

STREPSIADES.

Never truſt me,
If yet I ſee them clearly.

SOCRATES.

Then you muſt be
Sand-blind or worſe.

STREPSIADES.

[30] Nay, now by father Jove,
I cannot chuſe but ſee them—precious creatures!
For in good faith here's plenty and to ſpare.

*(Chorus of Clouds enter.)*

SOCRATES.

And didſt thou doubt if they were goddeſſes?

STREPSIADES.

Not I, ſo help me! only I'd a notion
That they were fog, and dew, and duſky vapor.

SOCRATES.

For ſhame! why, man, theſe are the nurſing mothers

[30] There is more *play* in this dialogue upon the introduction of the chorus than is generally to be found in the dry and ſimple conduct of the Greek drama. The magic powers and ſolemn ſtile of the philoſophy, the coarſe ruſticity and comic credulity of Strepſiades, with the chorus firſt heard in the air, then after a long and tantalizing expectation, brought perſonally on the ſtage as a troop of damſels, habited no doubt in character, and floating *cloud-like* in the dance, whilſt the dialogue proceeds explanatory on the part of Socrates, are all contrived with much addreſs, and with great attention to ſpectacle and ſtage effect.

Of

Of all our famous ſophiſts, fortune-tellers,
[31] Quacks, med'cine-mongers, bards bombaſtical,
Chorus projectors, ſtar interpreters
And wonder-making cheats—The gang of idlers,
Who pay them for their feeding with good ſtore
Of flattery and mouth worſhip.

STREPSIADES.

Now I ſee
Whom we may thank for driving them along
At ſuch a furious [32] dithyrambic rate,
Sun-ſhadowing clouds of many colour'd hues,
Air-rending tempeſts, hundred-headed Typhons;
Now rouſing, rattling them about our ears,
Now gently wafting them adown the ſky,
Moiſt, airy, bending, burſting into ſhowers;
For all which fine deſcriptions the poor knaves
Dine daintily on ſcraps.

SOCRATES.

And proper fare;
What better do they merit?

[31] The groupe Socrates here gives us of *cloud-inſpired* worthies has great comic point, it is the reply of ſophiſtry to common ſenſe, which had ſtruck upon the truth in a very natural ſolution of their properties, ſuppoſing them to be *fog* and *vapor*. It is an anſwer ſo contrived as to recoil upon himſelf.

[32] This rant is glanced at the dithyrambic writers, and Suidas ſays it points particularly at Philoxenus, whoſe compound epithets are here retailed in ridicule of his bombaſt and turgid diction. The ſatire is fair, but perhaps the old clown is not ſtrictly the perſon who ſhould be the vehicle of it.

STREPSIADES.

Under favor,
If theſe be clouds, (d' you mark me?) very clouds,
How came they metamorphos'd into women?
Clouds are not ſuch as theſe.

SOCRATES.

And what elſe are they?

STREPSIADES.

Troth, I can't rightly tell, but I ſhould gueſs
Something like flakes of wool, not women ſure;
And look! theſe dames have noſes—

SOCRATES.

Hark you, friend,
I'll put a queſtion to you.

STREPSIADES.

Out with it!
Be quick; let's have it.

SOCRATES.

This it is in ſhort—
Haſt thou ne'er ſeen a cloud, which thou cou'd'ſt fancy
Shap'd like a centaur, leopard, wolf or bull?

STREPSIADES.

Yea, marry, have I, and what then?

SOCRATES.

Why then
Clouds can aſſume what ſhapes they will, believe me;
For

For inſtance; ſhou'd they ſpy ſome hairy clown
Rugged and rough and like [33] the unlick't cub
Of Xenophantes, ſtrait they turn to centaurs,
And kick at him for vengeance.

STREPSIADES.

Well done, Clouds!
But ſhou'd they ſpy that peculating knave,
[34] Simon, that public thief, how wou'd they treat him?

SOCRATES.

As wolves—in character moſt like his own.

STREPSIADES.

Aye, there it is now, when they ſaw [35] Cleonymus,
That daſtard run-away, they turn'd to hinds
In honor of his cowardice.

SOCRATES.

And now,
Having ſeen [36] Cliſthenes, to mock his lewdneſs
They change themſelves to women.

STREPSIADES.

[33] Hieronymus the dithyrambic poet, ſon of Xenophantes, is here aimed at: The original paſſage ſpecifies an unnatural vice, which the clouds very appoſitely mark under the appearance of libidinous centaurs.

[34] Simon the ſophiſt is ſatyrized alſo by Eupolis for his great and notorious public frauds.

[35] Cleonymus had incurred the infamy of throwing away his ſhield in battle, and betaking himſelf to flight; the poet marks the affair as recent, and treats it with proportionable ſeverity.

[36] Cliſthenes was a character ſo contemptibly effeminate and vicious

STREPSIADES.

Welcome, ladies!
Imperial ladies, welcome! An' it pleaſe
Your Highneſſes ſo far to grace a mortal,
Give me a touch of your celeſtial voices.

CHORUS.

Hail, grandſire! who at this late hour of life
Wou'd'ſt go to ſchool for cunning, and all hail,
Thou prince pontifical of quirks and quibbles,
Speak thy full mind, make known thy wants and wiſhes?
Thee and our worthy [37] Prodicus excepted,
Not one of all your ſophiſts have our ear:
Him for his wit and learning we eſteem,
Thee for thy proud deportment and high looks,
In barefoot beggary ſtrutting up and down,
Content to ſuffer mockery for our ſake,
And carry a grave face whilſt others laugh.

vicious withal, that the impurity of his manners became proverbial. We find him in a fragment of Cratinus, and in other paſſages of our author. In this place he is peculiarly well brought in, and helps Socrates to a very ingenious ſolution of the queſtion put to him by Strepſiades, how his Clouds came to be metamorphoſed into women.

[37] A famous ſophiſt, native of Ceos, and a diſciple of Protagoras, founder of the title, whoſe writings were condemned to the flames by decree of the Athenians: The fate of Prodicus was more ſevere, inaſmuch as he was put to death by poiſon, as a teacher of doctrines which corrupted the youth of Athens. There was ſomething prophetic in thus grouping him with Socrates.

STREPSIADES.

Oh! mother earth, was ever voice like this,
So reverend, ſo portentous, ſo divine?

SOCRATES.

Theſe are your only Deities, all elſe
I flout at.

STREPSIADES.

Hold! Olympian Jupiter—
Is he no god?

SOCRATES.

[38] What Jupiter? what God?
Prythee no more—away with him at once.

STREPSIADES.

Say'ſt thou? who gives us rain? anſwer me that.

SOCRATES.

Theſe give us rain; as I will ſtrait demonſtrate:
Come on now—When did you e'er ſee it rain
Without a cloud? If Jupiter gives rain,
[39] Let him rain down his favors in the ſun-ſhine,
Nor aſk the clouds to help him.

STREPSIADES.

[38] Here is a ſtrong aſſertion grafted on the character of Socrates, but the levity it is introduced with, and the ridiculous comments Strepſiades makes upon it, argue no peculiar malice in the intention.

[39] The ſcholiaſt in his note upon this paſſage, gives us an allu-ſion to a ſtory of a certain Myſcelus, who upon conſulting the oracle,

STREPSIADES.

You have hit it,
Tis ſo; Heav'n help me, I did think till now,
When t'was his godſhip's pleaſure, he made water
Into a ſieve and gave the earth a ſhower.
But, hark'ye me, who thunders? tell me that;
For then it is I tremble.

SOCRATES.

Theſe, theſe thunder,
When they are tumbled.

STREPSIADES.

How, blaſphemer, how?

SOCRATES.

When they are charg'd with vapors full to th' burſting,
And bandied to and fro againſt each other,
Then with the ſhock they burſt and crack amain.

STREPSIADES.

And who is he that jowls them thus together
But Jove himſelf?

SOCRATES.

Jove! tis not Jove that does it,
[40] But the ætherial vortex.

STREPSIADES.

oracle, was directed to found a city in that very ſpot, where he ſhould be caught in a ſhower whilſt the ſky was clear. Deſpairing of an event ſo unnatural, he had the addreſs to interpret the tears of his miſtreſs as the fulfilment of the oracle, and proceeded to complete his project accordingly.

[40] The *ætherial vortex*, Αἰθέριος Δῖνος, is referable to the philo-

ſopher

STREPSIADES.

What is he?
I never heard of him; is he not Jove?
Or is Jove put aſide and Vortex crown'd
King of Olympus in his ſtate and place?
But let me learn ſome more of this ſame thunder.

SOCRATES.

Have you not learnt? I told you how the clouds,
Being ſurcharg'd with vapour, ruſh together
And in the conflict ſhake the poles with thunder.

STREPSIADES.

But who believes you?

SOCRATES.

You, as I ſhall prove it:
Mark the Panathenæa, where you cram
Your belly full of pottage; if you ſhake
And ſtir it luſtily about—what then?

STREPSIADES.

Marry, why then it gives a deſperate crack;
It bounces like a thunderbolt, the pottage
Keeps ſuch a coil within me—At the firſt

ſopher Anaxagoras, and it is a general remark, which the reader ſhould bear in mind, that all the ſatire beſtowed upon the character of Socrates in this comedy is not pointed perſonally, but through his vehicle at various ſophiſts and philoſophers, as they fall in the poet's way: Socrates was known to direct all his ſtudies to morality, and to reſcue his philoſophy from abſtruſe reſearches, as Cicero teſtifies.

*Pappax*

*Pappax* it cries—anon with double force,
*Papappax!*—when at length *Papapappax*
From forth my ſounding entrails thund'ring burſts.

SOCRATES.

Think then, if ſo your belly trumpets forth,
How muſt the vaſty vault of Heaven reſound,
When the clouds crack with thunder.

STREPSIADES.

Let that paſs,
And tell me of the light'ning, whoſe quick flaſh
Burns us to cinders; that at leaſt great Jove
Keeps in reſerve to launch at perjury.

SOCRATES.

Dunce, dotard! was you born before the flood
* To talk of perjury, whilſt Simon breathes,
Theorus and Cleonymus, whilſt they,
Thrice perjur'd villains, brave the lightning's ſtroke,
And gaze the Heav'ns unſcorcht? Wou'd theſe eſcape?
Why, man, Jove's random fires ſtrike his own fane,
Strike Sunium's guiltleſs top, ſtrike the dumb oak,
Who never yet broke faith or falſely ſwore.

STREPSIADES.

It may be ſo, good ſooth! You talk this well,
But I wou'd fain be taught the natural cauſe
Of theſe appearances.

* Lucretius has dilated this thought into two very fine paſſages, in his ſixth book, v. 386,—v. 416.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Mark when the winds,
In their free courſes check'd, are pent and purs'd
As 'twere within a bladder, ſtretching then
And ſtruggling for expanſion, they burſt forth
With crack ſo fierce as ſets the air on fire.

STREPSIADES.

The devil they do! why now the murder's out:
So was I ſerv'd with a damn'd paunch, I broil'd
On Jove's day laſt, juſt ſuch a ſcurvy trick;
Becauſe forſooth, not dreaming of your thunder,
I never thought to give the raſcal vent,
Bounce! goes the bag, and covers me all over
With filth and ordure till my eyes ſtruck fire.

[41] CHORUS.

The envy of all Athens ſhalt thou be,
Happy old man, who from our lips doſt ſuck
Into thine ears true wiſdom, ſo thou art
But wiſe to learn, and ſtudious to retain
What thou haſt learnt, patient to bear the blows
And buffets of hard fortune, to perſiſt
Doing or ſuffering, firmly to abide
Hunger and cold, not craving where to dine,
To drink, to ſport and triſle time away,
But holding that for beſt, which beſt becomes

[41] This ſpeech, which in the common editions is given to Socrates, is very properly reſtored by Brunck to the chorus.

A man who means to carry all things through
Neatly, expertly, perfect at all points
With head, hands, tongue, to force his way to fortune.

STREPSIADES.

Be confident; I give myself for one
Of a tough heart, watchful as care can make me,
A frugal, pinching fellow, that can sup
Upon a sprig of savory and to bed;
I am your man for this, hard as an anvil.

SOCRATES.

Tis well, so you will ratify your faith
In these our deities—chaos and clouds
And speech—to these and only these adhere.

STREPSIADES.

If from this hour henceforth I ever waste
A single thought on any other gods,
Or give them sacrifice, libation, incense,
Nay, even common courtesy, renounce me.

CHORUS.

Speak your wish boldly then, so shall you prosper
As you obey and worship us, and study
The wholesome art of thriving.

STREPSIADES.

Gracious ladies,
I ask no mighty favour, simply this—
Let me but distance every tongue in Greece,
And run 'em out of sight a hundred lengths.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Is that all? there we are your friends to ſerve you:
We will endow thee with ſuch powers of ſpeech,
As henceforth not a demagogue in Athens
Shall ſpout ſuch popular harangues as thou ſhalt.

STREPSIADES.

A fig for powers of ſpouting! give me powers
Of nonſuiting my creditors.

CHORUS.

A trifle—
Granted as ſoon as aſk'd; only be bold,
And ſhew yourſelf obedient to your teachers.

STREPSIADES.

With your help ſo I will, being undone,
Stript of my pelf by theſe high blooded cattle,
And a fine dame, the torment of my life.
[42] Now let them work their wicked will upon me;
They're welcome to my carcaſe; let 'em claw it,
Starve it with thirſt and hunger, fry it, freeze it,
Nay, flay the very ſkin off; 'tis their own;
So that I may but fob my creditors,
Let the world talk, I care not tho' it call me
A bold fac'd, loud tongued, over bearing bully;
A ſhameleſs, vile, prevaricating cheat;
A tricking, quibbling, double dealing knave;

[42] Here ſome of the old editions make Socrates and the Chorus leave the ſtage, and throw the remainder of this ſpeech into ſoliloquy.

A prating, pettyfogging limb o' th' law;
A ſly old fox, a perjurer, a hang dog,
A raggamuffin made of ſhreds and patches,
The leavings of a dunghill—Let 'em rail,
Yea, marry, let 'em turn my guts to fiddle-ſtrings,
[43] May my bread be my poiſon! if I care.

CHORUS.

This fellow hath a prompt and daring ſpirit—
Come hither, Sir; do you perceive and feel
What great and glorious fame you ſhall acquire
By this our ſchooling of you?

STREPSIADES.

What, I pray you?

CHORUS.

What but to live the envy of mankind
Under our patronage?

STREPSIADES.

When ſhall I ſee
Thoſe halcyon days?

[43] This torrent of terms, nearly if not quite ſynonymous, forms one of the moſt curious paſſages in this very ſingular author, and is ſuch a ſpecimen of the verſatility and variety of the language, as almoſt defies tranſlation. They are anapæſts in the original, and have been ignorantly thrown into ſoliloquy, which is properly corrected in Brunck's edition, for which there is not only the authority of the beſt MSS, but internal evidence of the ſtrongeſt ſort. I have ſtruggled with the difficulty to the beſt of my power, and if the learned reader will take the trouble to compare my effort with the original, I flatter myſelf he will not think I have been unfaithful or unfortunate in the attempt.

CHORUS

CHORUS.

Then ſhall your doors be throng'd
With clients waiting for your coming forth,
All eager to conſult you, preſſing all
To catch a word from you, with abſtracts, briefs,
And caſes ready drawn for your opinion.
But come, begin and lecture this old fellow;
Sift him, that we may ſee what meal he's made of.

SOCRATES.

Hark'ye, let's hear what principles you hold,
That theſe being known, I may apply ſuch tools
As tally with your ſtuff.

STREPSIADES.

Tools! by the gods;
Are you about to ſpring a mine upon me?

SOCRATES.

Not ſo, but ſimply in the way of practice
To try your memory.

STREPSIADES.

Oh! as for that,
My memory is of two ſorts, long and ſhort:
With them, who owe me aught, it never fails;
My creditors indeed complain of it,
As mainly apt to leak and loſe it's reck'ning.

SOCRATES.

But let us hear if nature hath endow'd you
With any grace of ſpeaking.

STREPSIADES.

None of ſpeaking,
But a moſt apt propenſity to cheating.

SOCRATES.

If this be all, how can you hope to learn?

STREPSIADES.

Fear me not, never break your head for that.

SOCRATES.

Well then, be quick, and when I ſpeak of things
Myſterious and profound, ſee that you make
No boggling, but—

STREPSIADES.

I underſtand your meaning;
You'd have me bolt philoſophy by mouthfuls,
[44] Juſt like a hungry cur.

SOCRATES.

Oh! brutal, groſs,
And barbarous ignorance! I much ſuſpect,
Old as thou art, thou muſt be taught with ſtripes:
Tell me now, when thou'rt beaten, what doſt feel?

STREPSIADES.

The blows of him that beats me I do feel;
But having breath'd awhile I lay my action
And cite my witneſſes; anon more cool,

[44] He glances at the Cynic philoſophers.

I bring

I bring my cauſe into the court, and ſue
For damages.

SOCRATES.

Strip off your cloak! prepare.

STREPSIADES.

Prepare for what? what crime have I committed?

SOCRATES.

None; but the rule and cuſtom is with us,
That all ſhall enter naked.

STREPSIADES.

And why naked?
I come with no ſearch warrant; fear me not;
I'll carry nought away with me.

SOCRATES.

No matter;
[45] Conform yourſelf, and ſtrip.

[45] The humour of this, and every other dialogue between theſe characters, conſiſts in the clown's continual miſconſtruction of the philoſopher's meaning. The poet, who ſeems to hold all the ſuperſtitious ceremonies of the heathen religion in contempt, makes Socrates inſiſt upon Strepſiades ſtripping himſelf naked before he can be admitted of his ſchool, becauſe ſuch was the practice with thoſe, who were initiated into the *ſacred myſteries*. The clown, who does not ſee the drift of this injunction, excuſes himſelf from obeying it, by ſaying, he does not come like thoſe, who are ſent upon the ſearch for ſtolen goods, and who by law were obliged to enter all ſuch houſes naked, and ſo to go out of them, that their warrant might not be made a pretence for plundering the owners.

STREPSIADES.

And if I do,
Tell me for my encouragement to which
Of all your ſcholars will you liken me.

SOCRATES.

You ſhall be call'd a ſecond Chærephon.

STREPSIADES.

Ah! Chærephon is but another name
For a dead corpſe—excuſe me.

SOCRATES.

No more words:
Pluck up your courage; anſwer not, but follow:
Haſte and be perfected.

STREPSIADES.

[46] Give me my dole
Of honey-cake in hand, and paſs me on;
Ne'er truſt me if I do not quake and tremble
As if the cavern of Trophonius yawn'd,
And I were ſtepping in.

SOCRATES.

What ails you? enter!

[46] Strepſiades, though ſeemingly unconſcious of the alluſions to the ſacred myſteries, is perfectly well verſed in the ceremonials of Trophonius's cave, and aſks for the honey cake, which is an indiſpenſible oblation to the prophetic dragon under ground. The circumſtance of ſtripping naked applies equally to the candidate for admiſſion to the cave, as well as to the myſteries, properly ſo called.

Why

Why do you halt and loiter at the door?

*(Exeunt Socrates and Strepsiades.)*

CHORUS.

Go, brave adventurer, proceed!
May fortune crown the gallant deed;
Tho' far advanc'd in life's last stage,
Spurning the infirmities of age,
Thou can'st to youthful labours rise,
And boldly struggle to be wise.

---

[47] Ye, who are here spectators of our scene,

[47] This address, it is presumed, was spoken by the Chorus on the part of the author, and probably by one wearing his mask. I think it is easy to understand his motives for the introduction of it here, whilst the action of the comedy is suspended, and in this stage of it's progress rather than as a prologue before the opening of the play, when the minds of the audience might have been less favourably disposed to receive it. Depending upon the interest, which the preceding scenes would naturally create, he now ventures gently to expostulate with them upon the hard treatment his former comedy of the Clouds had met with, vindicating that performance, yet artfully charging it's miscarriage upon a cabal, whose ignorance and injustice they had no share in. This is curious, as far as it gives us an insight into the mind and feelings of the poet, where we can at once discover a high sense and understanding of his own merit, and a keen resentment of the indignity he had suffered by what he calls a faction, from which however he exculpates his present audience, only because he fears to provoke them to a similar opposition, and finds it necessary to sooth them into good humour, fully evincing by the compliments he pays them, how doubtfully he thought of his own situation, and of their disposition to support him in his present undertaking.

Give me your patience to a few plain words,
And by my patron Bacchus, whoſe I am,
I ſwear they ſhall be true ones—Gentle friends,
So may I proſper in your fair eſteem,
As I declare in truth that I was mov'd
To tender you my former comedy,
As deeming it the beſt of all my works,
And you it's judges worthy of that work,
Which I had wrought with my beſt care and pains:
But fools were found to thruſt me from the ſtage,
And you, whoſe better wiſdom ſhould have ſav'd me
From that moſt vile cabal, permitted it;
For which I needs muſt chide, yet not ſo ſharply
As to break off from ſuch approv'd good friends:
No, you have been my patrons from all time,
Ev'n to my firſt born iſſue: when I dropt
My bantling at your door to hide the ſhame
Of one, who call'd herſelf a maiden muſe,
You charitably took the foundling in,
And gave it worthy training. Now, behold,
This ſiſter comedy, Electra like,
Comes on the ſearch if ſhe perchance may find
Some recognition of her brother loſt,
Tho' but a relick of his well known hair.
Seemly and modeſt ſhe appears before you;
Not like our ſtage buffoons in ſhaggy hide
To ſet the mob a roaring; ſhe will vent

No fooliſh jeſts at [48] baldneſs, will not dance
The ſottiſh [49] cordax; we have no old man
Arm'd with a ſtaff to practiſe manual jokes
On the by-ſtanders ribs, and keep the ring
For them who dance the chorus: you ſhall ſee
No [50] howling furies burſt upon the ſtage
Waving their fiery torches; other weapons
Than the muſe gives us we ſhall not employ,
Nor let [51] Ah me, ah me! ſigh in your ears.
Yet not of this I boaſt, nor that I ſcorn
To cater for your palates out of ſcraps
At ſecond or third hand, but freſh and fair
And ſtill original, as one, who knows
When he has done a good deed where to ſtop,
And having levell'd [52] Cleo to the ground,

[48] This is a retort upon Eupolis, who had taken occaſion to ridicule Ariſtophanes for ſo poor a reaſon as his being bald headed. I need not remind the reader that the *Electra-like* points at Æſchylus.

[49] The cordax was a comic dance of a groſs and indecent character, in which the performers counterfeited drunkenneſs. It became proverbial, and is alluded to by a variety of authors; *ſee Meurſius in Orcheſtra.*

[50] Æſchylus was mulct in a heavy fine for introducing his chorus of furies armed with fiery torches.

[51] He ſays (glancing at the hypochondriac philoſophers) that he will not weary his audience with the mournful repetitions of ἰὲ, ἰὲ! Yet with theſe very words Strepſiades opens the very play we are upon.

[52] Cleo's death took place in the year following.

Not to inſult his carcaſe, like to thoſe
Who having once run down Hyperbolus,
Poor devil! mouth and mangle without mercy
Him and his mother too; foremoſt of theſe
Was Eupolis, who pilfer'd from my muſe,
And paſs'd it for his own with a new name,
Guilty the more for having daſh'd his theft
With the obſcene device of an old hag
Dancing the drunken cordax in her cups,
Like her Phrynichus feign'd to be devour'd
By the ſea-monſter—Shame upon ſuch ſcenes!
Hermippus next *Hyperboliz'd* amain,
And now the whole pack open in full cry,
Holding the game in chace, which I had rous'd.
[53] If there be any here, who laugh with theſe,
Let ſuch not ſmile with me; but if this night
Ye crown theſe ſcenes with merited applauſe,
Poſterity ſhall juſtify your taſte.

[53] It is curious, though not pleaſing, to obſerve with what acrimony theſe contemporary wits purſue each other, and it is not unnatural to conclude, that wherever the practice ſhall obtain, as at Athens, of reviewing the dramatic productions of the year, and adjudging the prize of fame to one above all the reſt, the conſequences muſt ever be ſuch, or nearly ſuch, as we now contemplate. Thoſe adjudications, we have authority to believe, were in many caſes partial, or at leaſt injudicious, and even at beſt they could not but be attended with murmurs and remonſtrances, nor fail to aggravate the animoſity and enflame the envious ſpirits of rival authors, high in their own conceit, and keenly jealous of each other's ſucceſs.

SEMICHORUS.

SEMICHORUS.

Great Jove, ſupreme of gods, and heav'n's high king,
Firſt I invoke; [54] next him the trident's lord,
Whoſe mighty ſtroke ſmites the wild waves aſunder,
And makes the firm earth tremble; thee, from whom
We draw our being, all inſpiring Air,
Parent of nature; and thee, radiant Sun,
Thron'd in thy flaming chariot, I invoke,
Dear to the gods and by the world ador'd.

CHORUS OF CLOUDS.

Moſt grave and ſapient judges, hear the charge,
Which we ſhall now prefer, of ſlights ill brook'd
By us your wrong'd appellants: for whilſt we,
The patroneſſes of your ſtate, the Clouds,
Of all the powers celeſtial ſerve you moſt,
You graceleſs mortals ſerve us not at all;
Nor ſmoke, nor ſacrifice aſcends from you,
But blank ingratitude and cold neglect.
If ſome raſh enterprize you ſet on foot,
Some brainleſs project, ſtrait with rain or thunder,
Sure warnings, we apprize you of your folly:
When late you made that offspring of a tanner,
That Paphlagonian odious to the gods,
The general of your armies, mark how fierce

[54] He follows the Homeric order in addreſſing Neptune next to Jupiter; and in his attributes ſeems to have the Prometheus of Æſchylus in his eye.

We

We ſcowl'd upon you, and indignant roll'd
Our thunders intermixt with flaſhing fires;
The Moon forſook her courſe, and the vext Sun
Quench'd his bright torch, diſdaining to behold
Cleo your chief, yet chief that Cleo was,
For it ſhould ſeem a proverb with your people,
That meaſures badly taken beſt ſucceed:
But if you'll learn of us the ready mode
To cancel your paſt errors, and enſure
Fame and good fortune for the public weal,
You have nought elſe to do,[55] but ſtop the ſwallow
Of that wide gaping cormorant, that thief
Convicted and avow'd, with a neat nooſe
Drawn tight and fitted to his ſcurvy throat.

SEMICHORUS.

Thou too, Apollo, of thy native iſle,
Upon the Cinthian mount high thron'd, the king,
Hear and be preſent! thou, Epheſian goddeſs,
Whoſe golden ſhrine the Lydian damſels ſerve
With rich and coſtly worſhip; thou, Minerva,
Arm'd with the dreadful ægis, virgin queen,

[55] In this period of the Greek comedy, theſe appeals to the theatre had a kind of Saturnalian privilege for perſonalities of the coarſeſt ſort. It does not appear that Cleo's public character deſerved theſe invectives, though his private one was far from amiable. The account of his public ſervices will be found in Thucydides, lib. iv. and he died in battle; but Ariſtophanes bore him an inveterate grudge for oppoſing him in the matter of his naturalization.

And

And patroneſs of Athens; thou, who hold'ſt
Divided empire on Parnaſſus' heights,
Lead hither thy gay train of revellers,
Convivial god, and thus invok'd approach!

CHORUS.

As we were hither journeying in midway
We croſt upon the Moon, who for a while
Held us in converſe, and with courteous greeting
To this aſſembly charg'd us—This premis'd,
The tenor of our next inſtruction points
To anger and complaint for ill returns
On your part to good offices on her's.
Firſt, for the loan of her bright ſilver lamp
So long held out to you, by which you've ſav'd
Your torch and lacquey for this many a night.
More ſhe could name, if benefits avail'd;
But you have loſt all reck'ning of your feaſts,
And turn'd your calendar quite topſey-turvey;
So that the deities, who find themſelves
Bilk'd of their dues, and ſupperleſs for lack
Of their accuſtom'd ſacrifices, rail
At her, poor Moon, and vent their hungry ſpite,
As ſhe were in the fault; whilſt you, forſooth,
Maliciouſly ſelect our gala days,
When feaſting would be welcome, for your ſuits
And criminal indictments; [56] but when we

Keep

[56] When the poet, who is here ſpeaking in his own perſon, indulges himſelf in ſuch a vein of daring ridicule, it would be hard

to

Keep faſt and put on mourning for the loſs
Of Memnon or Sarpedon, ſons of Heaven,
Then, then you mock us with the ſavoury odour
Of ſmoking dainties, which we may not taſte:
Therefore it is, that when this year ye ſent
Your deputy Amphictyon to the diet,
(Hyperbolus forſooth) in juſt revenge
We tore away his crown, and drove him back
To warn you how you ſlight the Moon again.

SOCRATES, STREPSIADES, CHORUS.

SOCRATES.

[57] O vivifying breath, etherial air,

to ſuppoſe that he was ſeriouſly employed to fix the charge of impiety upon Socrates, for the purpoſe of bringing him to trial. That he was guiltleſs of this cruel intention, ſtronger internal evidence cannot be adduced than what this Chorus affords; and there muſt be a wondrous want of reverence for the gods amongſt the people at large, or an unbounded privilege of lampooning them on the ſtage, when ſuch paſſages as this could paſs with impunity. As for the ſeemingly ſerious invocations of the Semichorus, them I regard as mere parodies upon the tragic poets, who carried them to exceſs; and it was only becauſe Socrates was known to hold the licentiouſneſs of the comic poets in contempt, that they were provoked to retort that contempt upon him and his doctrines.

57 This is one of the paſſages where Ariſtophanes is charged with having paved the way for Anytus and Melitus in their attack upon Socrates; but referring to what we have repeatedly offered upon this ſubject, we leave it with the reader. The circumſtance of the vermin, which annoy Strepſiades in his pallet, is ridicule of no very cleanly ſpecies, yet the affected poverty of habit, which many of the ſophiſts put on, and their loathſome neglect of their perſons, merited contempt and reproof.

And

And thou profoundeſt chaos, witneſs for me
If ever wretch was ſeen ſo groſs and dull,
So ſtupid and perplext as this old clown,
Whoſe ſhallow intellect can entertain
No image nor impreſſion of a thought;
But ere you've told it, it is loſt and gone.
'Tis time however he ſhould now come forth
In the broad day—What hoa! Strepſiades—
Take up your pallet; bring yourſelf and it
Into the light.

STREPSIADES.

Yes, if the bugs would let me.

SOCRATES.

Quick, quick, I ſay; ſet down your load and liſten!

STREPSIADES.

Lo! here am I.

SOCRATES.

Come, tell me what it is
That you would learn beſides what I have taught you;
Is it of meaſure, verſe, or modulation?

STREPSIADES.

Of meaſure by all means, for I was fobb'd
Of two days dole i' th' meaſure of my meal
By a damn'd knaviſh huckſter.

SOCRATES.

Piſh! who talks
Of meal? I aſk which metre you prefer,
Tetrametre or trimetre.

STREPSIADES

STREPSIADES.

I anſwer—

[58] Give me a pint pot.

SOCRATES.

Yes, but that's no anſwer.

STREPSIADES.

No anſwer! ſtake your money, and I'll wager
That your tetrametre is half my pint pot.

SOCRATES.

Go to the gallows, clodpate, with your pint pot!
Will nothing ſtick to you? But come, perhaps
We may try further and fare better with you—
Suppoſe I ſpoke to you of modulation;
Will you be taught of that?

STREPSIADES.

Tell me firſt,
Will I be profited? will I be paid
The meal that I was chous'd of? tell me that.

SOCRATES.

You will be profited by being taught

[58] There was a certain meaſure, as near as poſſible to our pint, which the Greeks dealt out daily of meal to their ſlaves. To this Strepſiades alludes when he ſays he was defrauded of two meaſures, and to this humorous mal-entendû he obſtinately adheres through the whole ſcene, playing upon the pedantry of the philoſopher by contraſting it with the ruſticity of the clown, which, though difficult to tranſlate into modern language, is ſurely a ſcene in the beſt ſtile of the author.

To

To bear your part at table in ſome ſort
After a decent faſhion; you will learn
Which verſe is moſt commenſurate and fit
To the arm'd chorus in the dance of war,
And which with moſt harmonious cadence guides
The dactyl in his courſe poetical.

STREPSIADES.

The dactyl, quotha! Sure I know that well.

SOCRATES.

As how? diſcuſs.

STREPSIADES.

Here, at my fingers end;
This is my dactyl, and has been my dactyl
Since I could count my fingers.

SOCRATES.

Oh! the dolt.

STREPSIADES.

[59] I wiſh to be no wiſer in theſe matters.

SOCRATES.

What then?

STREPSIADES.

Why then, teach me no other art
But the fine art of coſening.

[59] This is an excellent anſwer on the part of common ſenſe to all ſuch unprofitable and pedantic trifling. It is not eaſy to conceive how the wit of man could deviſe means of exhibiting the character of a ſophiſt in a more ludicrous light, than is done throughout the whole of this very extraordinary drama.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Granted; ſtill
There is ſome previous matter, as for inſtance
[60] The genders male and female—Can you name them?

STREPSIADES.

I were a fool elſe—Theſe are maſculine;
Ram, bull, goat, dog, and pullet.

SOCRATES.

There you're out:
Pullet is male and female.

STREPSIADES.

Tell me how?

SOCRATES.

Cock and hen pullet—So they ſhould be nam'd.

STREPSIADES.

And ſo they ſhould, by the ætherial air!
You've hit it; for which rare diſcovery,
Take all the meal this cardopus contains.

SOCRATES.

Why there again you ſin againſt the genders,

[60] If this ſame art of cozening was little elſe but that of quibbling upon words, the philoſopher is not without reaſon made to lecture his pupil upon the genders of nouns; and as the meaneſt evaſion language will admit of is that ſpecies of quibbling to which this lecture leads, ſeverer ridicule could not be employed againſt the perſon it affects; whether it was well or ill founded we do not ſay, but, be that as it may, take it as a ſpecimen of comic contraſt, and perhaps no two characters were ever preſented on the ſtage more humorouſly or more ingeniouſly oppoſed.

To

To call your bolting tub a cardopus,
Making that maſculine which ſhould be fem'nine.

STREPSIADES.

How do I make my bolting tub a male?

SOCRATES.

Did you not call it cardopus? As well
You might have call'd Cleonymus a man;
He and your bolting-tub alike belong
To t'other ſex, believe me.

STREPSIADES.

Well, my trough
Shall be a Cardopa and he Cleonyma;
Will that content you?

SOCRATES.

Yes, and while you live
Learn to diſtinguiſh ſex in proper names.

STREPSIADES.

I do; the female I am perfect in.

SOCRATES.

Give me the proof.

STREPSIADES.

Lyſilla, ſhe's a female;
Philinna, and Demetria, and Clitagora.

SOCRATES.

Now name your males.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

A thouſand—as for inſtance,
Philoxenus, Meleſias, and Amynias.

SOCRATES.

Call you theſe maſculine, egregious dunce?

STREPSIADES.

Are they not ſuch with you?

SOCRATES.

No; put the caſe,
You and Amynias meet—how will you greet him?

STREPSIADES.

Why, thus for inſtance—Hip! holla!. Aminia!

SOCRATES.

There, there! you make a wench of him at once.

STREPSIADES.

[61] And fit it is for one who ſhuns the field;
A coward ought not to be call'd a man;
Why teach me what is known to all the world?

SOCRATES.

Aye, why indeed?—but come, repoſe yourſelf.

STREPSIADES.

Why ſo?

[61] This Amynias ſeems to have had his full ſhare of abuſe from the comic poets of his time: Eupolis, Crates, and our author, in various parts, beſtow it very plentifully.

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

For meditation's ſake: lie down.

STREPSIADES.

Not on this louſy pallet I beſeech you;
But if I muſt lie down, let me repoſe
On the bare earth and meditate.

SOCRATES.

Away!
There's nothing but this bed will cheriſh thought.

STREPSIADES.

It cheriſhes, alas! a hoſt of bugs,
That ſhew no mercy on me.

SOCRATES.

Come, begin,
Cudgel your brains and turn yourſelf about;
Now ruminate awhile, and if you ſtart
A thought that puzzles you, try t'other ſide
And turn to ſomething elſe, but not to ſleep;
Suffer not ſleep to cloſe your eyes one moment.

STREPSIADES.

Ah! woe is me; ah, woeful, well-a-day!

SOCRATES.

What ails you? why this moaning?

STREPSIADES.

I am loſt;
I've rous'd the natives from their hiding holes;
A colony

A colony of bugs in ambuſcade
Have fall'n upon me; belly, back and ribs,
No part is free: I feed a commonwealth.

SOCRATES.

Take not your ſufferings too much to heart

STREPSIADES.

How can I chuſe—a wretch made up of wants!
Here am I pennileſs and ſpiritleſs,
Without a ſkin, Heav'n knows, without a ſhoe;
And to complete my miſeries here I lie
Like a ſtarv'd centinel upon his poſt
At watch and ward, till I am ſhrunk to nothing.

SOCRATES.

How now; how fare you? Have you ſprung a thought?

STREPSIADES.

Yes, yes, ſo help me Neptune!

SOCRATES.

Hah! what is it?

STREPSIADES.

Why I am thinking if theſe curſed vermin
Will leave one fragment of my carcaſe free.

SOCRATES.

A plague confound you!

STREPSIADES.

Spare yourſelf that prayer;
I'm plagu'd already to your heart's content.

SOCRATES.

Prythee don't be ſo tender of your ſkin;
Tuck yourſelf up and buff it like a man:
Keep your ſcull under cover, and depend on't
'Twill make your brain bring forth ſome precious project
For farthering your good fortune at the expence
Of little elſe but honeſty and juſtice.

STREPSIADES.

Ah! would to Heav'n ſome friendly ſoul would help me
To a fine project how to cheat the bugs
With a ſleek lambſkin.

SOCRATES.

Whereabouts, I trow,
Sits the wind now? What ails you? are you dozing?

STREPSIADES.

Not I, by Heaven!

SOCRATES.

Can you ſtart nothing yet?

STREPSIADES.

Nothing, ſo help me.

SOCRATES.

Will your head breed no project,
Tho' nurs'd ſo daintily?

STREPSIADES.

What ſhould it breed?
Tell me, ſweet Socrates; give me ſome hint.

SOCRATES.

Say firſt what 'tis you wiſh.

STREPSIADES.

A thouſand times,
Ten thouſand times I've ſaid it o'er and o'er—
My creditors, my creditors—'Tis them
I would fain bilk.

SOCRATES.

Go to! get under cover,
Keep your head warm, and rariſy your wits
Till they ſhall ſprout into ſome fine conceit,
Some ſcheme of happy promiſe: ſift it well,
Divide, abſtract, compound, and when 'tis ready,
Out with it boldly.

STREPSIADES.

Miſerable me!
Would I were out!

SOCRATES.

[62] Lie ſtill, and if you ſtrike
Upon a thought that baffles you, break off

[62] This incident of the truckle bed, and all Socrates's inſtructions for ſoliciting the inſpiration of ſome ſudden thought, are a banter upon the pretended viſions and communications with dæmons of the ſophiſts and philoſophers; tricks brought by them out of Egypt and the Eaſt, which ſerved to impoſe upon the credulous and vulgar.

From

From that intanglement and try another,
So ſhall your wits be freſh to ſtart again.

STREPSIADES.

Hah! my dear boy!—My precious Socrates!

SOCRATES.

What would'ſt thou, gaffer?

STREPSIADES.

I have ſprung a thought;
A plot upon my creditors.

SOCRATES.

Diſcuſs!

STREPSIADES.

Anſwer me this—Suppoſe that I ſhould hire
A witch, who ſome fair night ſhall raiſe a ſpell,
Whereby I'll ſnap the moon from out her ſphere
And bag her—

SOCRATES.

What to do!

STREPSIADES.

To hold her faſt,
And never let her run her courſes more;
So ſhall I ſcape my creditors.

SOCRATES.

How ſo?

STREPSIADES.

Becauſe the calculations of their uſury
Are made from month to month.

SOCRATES.

A gallant ſcheme;
And yet methinks I could ſuggeſt a hint
As practicable and no leſs ingenious—
Suppoſe you are arreſted for a debt,
We'll ſay five talents, how will you contrive
To cancel at a ſtroke both debt and writ?

STREPSIADES.

Gramercy! I can't tell you how off hand;
It needs ſome cogitation.

SOCRATES.

Were you apt,
Such cogitations would not be to ſeek;
They would be preſent at your fingers ends,
Buzzing alive, like chafers in a ſtring,
Ready to ſlip and fly.

STREPSIADES.

I've hit the nail
That does the deed, and ſo you will confeſs.

SOCRATES.

Out with it then!

STREPSIADES.

Good chance but you have noted
A pretty

A pretty toy, a trinket in the ſhops,
Which being rightly held produceth fire
From things combuſtible—

SOCRATES.

A burning glaſs,

Vulgarly call'd—

STREPSIADES.

You are right; 'tis ſo.

SOCRATES.

Proceed!

STREPSIADES.

Put the caſe now your whoreſon bailiff comes,
Shews me his writ—I, ſtanding thus, d'ye mark me,
In the ſun's ſtream, meaſuring my diſtance, guide
My focus to a point upon his writ,
And off it goes in fume.

SOCRATES.

By the Graces!

'Tis wittingly devis'd.

STREPSIADES.

The very thought
Of his five talents cancell'd at a ſtroke
Makes my heart dance for joy.

SOCRATES.

But now again—

STREPSIADES.

What next?

SOCRATES.

Suppoſe yourſelf at bar, ſurpriz'd
Into a ſuit, no witneſſes at hand,
The judge prepar'd to paſs decree againſt you—
How will you parry that?

STREPSIADES.

As quick as thought—

SOCRATES.

But how?

STREPSIADES.

Incontinently hang myſelf,
And baulk the ſuitor—

SOCRATES.

Come, you do but jeſt.

STREPSIADES.

Serious, by all the gods! A man that's dead
Is out of the law's reach.

SOCRATES.

I've done with you—
Inſtruction's loſt upon you; your vile jeſts
Put me beyond all patience.

STREPSIADES.

Nay, but tell me
What is it, my good fellow, that offends thee?

SOCRATES.

SOCRATES.

Your execrable lack of memory.
Why how now; what was the firſt rule I taught you?

STREPSIADES.

Say'ſt thou the firſt? the very firſt—what was it?
Why, let me ſee; 'twas ſomething, was it not?
About the meal—Out on it! I have loſt it.

SOCRATES.

Oh thou incorrigible, old doating blockhead,
Can hanging be too bad for thee!

STREPSIADES.

Why there now!
Was ever man ſo us'd? If I can't make
My tongue keep pace with your's, teach it the quirks
And quibbles of your ſophiſtry at once,
I may go hang—I am a fool forſooth—
Where ſhall I turn.[65] Oh gracious Clouds, befriend me,
Give me ſome counſel.

[63] This apoſtrophe to the Chorus, for which the old man is prepared by the reproaches of Socrates, is very artfully introduced. It not only gives them a timely intereſt in the ſcene, and breaks the long ſilence they had kept, but produces a new incident in the drama, on which the cataſtrophe is made to turn. It is alſo perfectly fit, that the thought of ſending the ſon to Socrates in place of the father ſhould be ſuggeſted by the Chorus, and not ſpring from either of the perſons preſent on the ſcene.

CHORUS.

This it is, old man—
If that your ſon at home is apt and docile,
Depute him in your ſtead, and ſend him hither.

STREPSIADES.

My ſon is well endow'd with nature's gifts,
But obſtinately bent againſt inſtruction.

CHORUS.

And do you ſuffer it?

STREPSIADES.

What can I do?
He's a fine full grown youth, a daſhing fellow,
And by the mother's ſide of noble blood:
I'll feel my way with him—but if he kicks,
Befall what may, nothing ſhall hinder me
But I will kick him headlong out of doors,
And let him graze ev'n where he will for me—
Wait only my return; I'll ſoon diſpatch. *(Exit.)*

CHORUS.

" Highly favour'd ſhalt thou be,
" With gifts and graces kept in ſtore
" For thoſe who our divinities adore,
" And to no other altars bend the knee:
" And well we know th' obedience ſhewn
" By this old clown deriv'd alone
" From leſſons taught by thee.

" Wherefore

" Wherefore to ſwell thy lawful gains,
" Thou ſoon ſhalt ſkin this ſilly cur,
" Whom thou haſt put in ſuch a ſtir,
" And take his plunder for thy pains:
" For mark how often dupes like him deviſe
" [64] Projects that only ſerve t' enrich the wiſe."

STREPSIADES, PHIDIPPIDES.

STREPSIADES.

Out of my houſe! I call the Clouds to witneſs
You ſhall not ſet a foot within my doors.
Go to your Lord Megacles! Get you hence,
And gnaw his poſts for hunger.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Ah, poor man!
I ſee how it is with you. You are mad,
Stark mad, by Jupiter!

[64] Such of the editions, as have arranged this comedy into acts, make the ſecond to conclude in this place. The ridiculous lucubrations of Strepſiades in the philoſopher's truckle bed, with his ſcheme of the witch and the burning glaſs, which form the humour of the foregoing ſcene, had doubtleſs ſome temporary points of perſonality, which we are now at a loſs to trace, further than in the project for arreſting the moon, where he ſeems to glance at Pythagoras. The *Clouds*, in this comedy, are not merely thoſe inſipid, epiſodical perſonages, which only ſeem to interrupt and encumber the drama, but take an important part in the buſineſs of the ſcene, and put in motion the chief incidents of the plot.

STREPSIADES.

You ſwear by Jupiter!
Why then I ſwear by Jove there's no ſuch god—
Now who is mad but you?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Why do you turn
Such ſolemn truths to ridicule!

STREPSIADES.

I laugh
To hear a child prate of ſuch old men's fables;
But liſt to what I'll tell you, learn of me,
And from a child you ſhall become a man—
But keep the ſecret cloſe, do you mark me, cloſe;
Beware of babbling—

PHIDIPPIDES.

Heyday! what is coming?

STREPSIADES.

You ſwore but now by Jupiter—

PHIDIPPIDES.

I did.

STREPSIADES.

Mark now what 'tis to have a friend like me—
I tell you at a word there is no Jupiter.

PHIDIPPIDES.

How then?

STREPSIADES.

He's off: I tell it you for truth;
He's out of place, and Vortex reigns in ſtead.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Vortex indeed! What freak has caught you now?

STREPSIADES.

No freak, 'tis fact.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Who tells you this?

STREPSIADES.

Who tells me?
Who but that [65] Melian atheiſt Socrates,
And Chærephon, the flea philoſopher?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Are you ſo far gone in your dotage, ſir,
As to be dup'd by the profane opinions
Of rancorous pædagogues?

STREPSIADES.

Keep a good tongue;
Take heed you ſlander not ſuch worthy men,

[65] He calls Socrates a Melian, inſinuating that he is, like Diagoras of Melos, a profeſt deſpiſer of the heathen deities. When this very comedy furniſhes ſo many paſſages in direct contempt of thoſe deities, the poet cannot be ſuppos'd to affix any great degree of criminality to his charge againſt him. The audience, that could endure the poet, might well excuſe the philoſopher.

So wiſe withal and learned, men ſo pure
And cleanly in their morals, that no razor
Ever prophan'd their beards; their unwaſht hides
Ne'er dabbled in a bath, nor wafted ſcent
Of od'rous ungent as they paſs'd along.
But you, a prodigal fine ſpark, make waſte
And havoc of my means, as I were dead
And out of thought—but come, turn in and learn.

PHIDIPPIDES.

What can I learn or profit from ſuch teachers?

STREPSIADES.

Thou can'ſt learn every thing that turns to profit;
But firſt and foremoſt thou can'ſt learn to know
Thyſelf how totally unlearn'd thou art,
How mere a blockhead and how dull of brain—
But wait awhile with patience— *(Exit.)*

PHIDIPPIDES.

Woe is me!
How ſhall I deal with this old crazy father?
What courſe purſue with one, whoſe reaſon wanders
Out of all courſe? Shall I take out the ſtatute
And cite him for a lunatic, or wait
Till nature and his phrenzy with the help
Of the undertaker ſhall provide a cure?

(STREPSIADES *returns.*)

STREPSIADES.

Now we ſhall ſee! Lo! what have I got here?

PHIDIPPIDES.

A chicken—

STREPSIADES.

Well, and this?—

PHIDIPPIDES.

A chicken alſo.

STREPSIADES.

Are they the ſame then? Have a care, good boy,
How you expoſe yourſelf, and for the future
Deſcribe them cock and hen chick ſeverally.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Ridiculous! Is this the grand diſcovery
You have juſt borrow'd from theſe ſons o' th' dunghill?

STREPSIADES.

This, and a thouſand others—but being old
And lax of memory I loſe it all
As faſt as it comes in.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Yes, and methinks
By the ſame token you have loſt your cloak.

STREPSIADES.

No, I've not loſt it; I have laid it out
Upon the arts and ſciences.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Your ſhoes—
They're vaniſh'd too. How have you laid them out?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Upon the commonwealth—Like [66] Pericles
I'm a barefooted patriot—Now no more;
Do as thou wilt, ſo thou wilt but conform
And humour me this once, as in times paſt
I humour'd thee, and in thy playful age
Brought thee a penny go-cart from the fair,
Purchas'd with what I had earn'd at the aſſize,
The fee with my ſubpœna.

PHIDIPPIDES.

You'll repent,
My life upon't; you will repent of this.

STREPSIADES.

No matter, ſo you'll humour me—What hoa!
Why Socrates, I ſay, come forth, behold
Here is my ſon; I've brought him, tho' in faith
Sorely againſt the grain.

(SOCRATES *enters.*)

SOCRATES:

Aye, he's a novice,
And knows not where the panniers hang as yet.

PHIDIPPIDES..

I would you'd hang yourſelf there in their ſtead!

[66] He alludes to the ſums that Pericles had expended in bribing the Lacedæmonian ephori, Cleander and Pliſtianax.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Oh monſtrous impudence! this to your maſter!

SOCRATES.

Mark how the ideot quibbles upon *hanging*,
Driv'ling and making mouths—Can he be taught
The loopholes of the law; whence to eſcape,
How to evade and when to preſs a ſuit,
Or tune his lips to that ſoft rhetoric,
Which ſteals upon the ear, and melts to pity
The heart of the ſtern judge?

STREPSIADES.

Come, never doubt him;
He is a lad of parts, and from a child
Took wondrouſly to dabbling in the mud,
Whereof he'd build you up a houſe ſo natural
As would amaze you, trace you out a ſhip,
Make you a little cart out of the ſole
Of an old ſhoe mayhap, and from the rhind
Of a pomegranate cut you out a frog,
You'd ſwear it was alive. Now what do you think?
Hath he not wit enough to comprehend
Each rule both right and wrong? Or if not both,
The latter way at leaſt [67]—There he'll be perfect.

[67] The account here given by the old man of his ſon's early talents is perfectly in character, and extremely pleaſant. It alſo prepares the audience for the introduction of the allegorical characters of the juſt and unjuſt man, that are about to enter on the ſcene.

SOCRATES,

SOCRATES.

Let him prepare: His lecturers are ready.

STREPSIADES.

I will retire—When next we meet, remember
I look to find him able to contend
'Gainſt right and reaſon, and outwit them both.

*(Exit.)*

[68] *(*DICÆUS *and* * ADICUS *enter.)*

DICÆUS.

Come forth; turn out, thou bold audacious man,
And face this company.

ADICUS.

* It is generally ſuppoſed, that after the departure of Strepſiades, and before the juſt and unjuſt perſonages enter on the ſtage, the Chorus had a preparatory addreſs in the original copy, which is now irretrievably loſt.

[68] The interlude, which now enſues between theſe allegorical perſonages, contending for the poſſeſſion of their pupil Phidippides, after the manner of the Choice of Hercules, forms a very curious paſſage in this celebrated comedy. It is in ſome parts very highly elevated, in others very pointedly ſevere. The object of the poet is to bring before his audience the queſtion between paſt and preſent education into full and fair diſcuſſion, comparing the principles of the ſchools then exiſting with the pure and moral diſcipline of former times, and though the advocate for ſophiſtry is allowed to triumph over the patron of reaſon in the event of this mock trial, yet the poet has contrived to elicit a juſter verdict from the Chorus, than he is willing to credit the ſpectators for: and we muſt acknowledge it is not without cauſe that he is thus ſevere in his reproaches for their partiality to the reigning ſyſtem, when we recollect that the magiſtracy of Athens

ADICUS.

Moſt willingly:
I do deſire no better: take your ground
Before this audience, I am ſure to triumph.

DICÆUS.

And who are you, that vapour in this faſhion?

ADICUS.

Faſhion itſelf—the very ſtile of the times.

DICÆUS.

Aye, of the modern times, and them and you
I ſet at naught.

ADICUS.

I ſhall bring down your pride.

DICÆUS.

By what moſt witty weapon?

ADICUS.

By the gift
Of a moſt apt invention.

DICÆUS.

Then I ſee
You have your fools to back you.

Athens had taken ſo ſtrong a part with the philoſophers againſt the ſtage, by ſilencing the comic writers to gratify the ſpleen of the Academies. To his own breaſt therefore, and to the breaſts of the Chorus only, he appeals for juſtice, and obtains it; the reſt he conſigns to depravity of judgment and corruption of principle.

ADICUS.

ADICUS.

No, the wiſe
Are thoſe I deal with.

DICÆUS.

I ſhall ſpoil your market.

ADICUS.

As how, good ſooth?

DICÆUS.

By ſpeaking ſuch plain truths
As may appeal to juſtice.

ADICUS.

What is juſtice?
There's no ſuch thing—I traverſe your appeal.

DICÆUS.

How! No ſuch thing as juſtice?

ADICUS.

No; where is it?

DICÆUS.

With the immortal gods.

ADICUS.

If it be there,
How chanc'd it [69] Jupiter himſelf eſcap'd
For his unnatural deeds to his own father?

DICÆUS.

[69] Theſe are ſtrong words, and if the learned reader refers to the original, throughout the whole of theſe ſhort ſpeakings, I flatter

DICÆUS.

For ſhame, irreverent wretch, thus do you talk?
I ſicken at impiety ſo groſs,
My ſtomach kicks againſt it.

ADICUS.

You are craz'd;
Your wits, old gentleman, are off the hinges.

DICÆUS.

You are a vile blaſphemer and buffoon.

ADICUS.

Go on! you pelt me—but it is with roſes.

DICÆUS.

A ſcoffer!

ADICUS.

Every word your malice vents
Weaves a freſh wreath of triumph for my brows.

DICÆUS.

A parricide!

I flatter myſelf he will credit me for as cloſe an adherence to my author, as our reſpective languages will admit of. To the whole of this curious altercation I have given my beſt attention, as I doubt not but the poet himſelf did when he conceived it. A bolder ſally of heathen blaſphemy than this is no where upon claſſic record, and though he checks the ſpeaker with a ſtrong reproof, yet the riſque of uttering it on the ſtage at all events, and the good reaſons we have to preſume the audience paſſed it off with impunity, is at leaſt a proof that the friends of Jupiter were not very zealous to revenge his affronts.

ADICUS.

ADICUS.

Proceed, and ſpare me not—
You ſhower down gold upon me.

DICÆUS.

Lead, not gold,
Had been your retribution in times paſt.

ADICUS.

Aye, but times preſent cover me with glory.

DICÆUS.

You are too wicked.

ADICUS.

You are much too weak.

DICÆUS.

Thank your own ſelf, if our Athenian fathers
Coop up their ſons at home, and fear to truſt them
Within your ſchools, conſcious that nothing elſe
But vice and folly can be learnt of you.

ADICUS.

Methinks, friend, your's is but a ragged trade.

DICÆUS.

And your's, oh ſhame! a thriving one, tho' late,
A perfect [70] Telephus, you tramp'd the ſtreet
With

[70] This is not the only paſſage in Ariſtophanes, nor is he the only comic poet who ſatirizes Euripides for his character of Telephus, charging him with having exhibited a ſpectacle too beggarly

With beggar's wallet cramm'd with hungry ſcraps
Of Pandeletus—pettifogging fare.

ADICUS.

Oh! what rare wiſdom you remind me of!

DICÆUS.

Oh, what rank folly their's who rule this city,
And let it nouriſh ſuch a peſt as you,
To ſap the morals of the riſing age.

ADICUS.

You'll not inſpire your pupil with theſe notions,
Old hoary headed time!

DICÆUS.

I will inſpire him,

beggarly and diſguſting to be ſuffered on the tragic ſtage. How the delicacy of an Athenian audience might reſent that ſpectacle, is no queſtion of criticiſm at the preſent moment; certain it is, that the language of Telephus has not degraded the ſtage, but has graces that might have atoned for the indecorum of his exterior, if in fact there was any. What the poet adds with reſpect to the contents of his beggar's wallet, which in place of cruſts and fragments of food he furniſhes with what he calls *Pandeletian* ſcraps or ſentences, this is figuratively ſaid in alluſion to his malignity, Pandeletus being notorious to a proverb for his malignant and litigious character, and accordingly held up to ridicule by the comic poets, particularly by Cratinus in his play of *The Centaurs*: the ſenſe of this paſſage, therefore, which in ſome copies is greatly corrupted, is, that he was as ſqualid as Telephus in his perſon, and as malicious as Pandeletus in his nature.

If he has grace, to ſhun the malady
Of your eternal clack.

ADICUS.

Turn to me, youth!
And let him rail at leiſure.

DICÆUS.

Keep your diſtance,
And lay your hands upon him at your peril.

CHORUS.

Come, no more wrangling.—Let us hear you both;
You of the former time produce your rules
Of antient diſcipline—of modern, you—
That ſo, both weigh'd, the candidate may judge
Who offers faireſt, and make choice between you.

DICÆUS.

I cloſe with the propoſal.

ADICUS.

'Tis agreed.

CHORUS.

But which of you ſhall open?

ADICUS.

That ſhall he:
I yield him up that point, and in reply,
My words like arrows levelled at a butt
Shall pierce him through and through; then if he rallies,

If he comes on again with a rejoinder,
I'll launch a ſwarm of ſyllogiſms at him,
That like a neſt of hornets ſhall belabour him,
Till they have left him not an eye to ſee with.

CHORUS.

"Now, ſirs, exert your utmoſt care
"And gravely for the charge prepare,
"The well rang'd hoard of thought explore,
"Where ſage experience keeps her ſtore;
"All the reſources of the mind
"Employment in this cauſe will find,
"And he who gives the beſt diſplay
"Of argument ſhall win the day:
"Wiſdom this hour at iſſue ſtands,
"And gives her fate into your hands;
"Your's is a queſtion that divides
"And draws out friends on different ſides;
"Therefore on you, who with ſuch zealous praiſe
"Applaud the diſcipline of former days,
"On you I call; now is your time to ſhew
"You merit no leſs praiſe than you beſtow."

DICÆUS.

Thus ſummon'd I prepare myſelf to ſpeak
Of manners primitive, and that good time
Which I have ſeen, when diſcipline prevail'd,
And modeſty was ſanctioned by the laws.
No babbling then was ſuffer'd in our ſchools,

The

The ſcholar's teſt was ſilence. The whole group
In orderly proceſſion ſallied forth
Right onwards, without ſtraggling, to attend
Their teacher in harmonies; tho' the ſnow
Fell on them thick as meal, the hardy brood
Breaſted the ſtorm uncloak'd: Their harps were ſtrung
Not to ignoble ſtrains, for they were taught
A loftier key, whether to chant the name
Of Pallas, terrible amidſt the blaze
Of cities overthrown, or wide and far
To ſpread, as cuſtom was, the echoing peal.
There let no low buffoon intrude his tricks,
Let no capricious quavering on a note,
No running of diviſions high and low
Break the pure ſtream of harmony, no [71] Phrynis
Practiſing wanton warblings out of place—
Woe to his back that ſo was found offending!
Hard ſtripes and heavy wou'd reform his taſte.
Decent and chaſte their poſtures in the ſchool
Of their gymnaſtic exerciſes; none
Expos'd an attitude that might provoke
Irregular deſire; their lips ne'er mov'd

[71] Phrynis of Mitylene, the ſcholar of Ariſtoclydes, is frequently alluded to by the comic poets for having introduced a new ſpecies of modulation in muſic, deviating from the ſimplicity of the antient harmony. When Callias was archon, Phrynis bore away the prize for minſtrelſy at the Panathenæa.

In

In love inſpiring whiſpers, and their walks
From eyes obſcene were ſacred and ſecure.
Hot herbs, the old man's diet, were proſcrib'd;
No radiſh, anice, parſley, deck'd their board;
No rioting, no revelling was there
At feaſt or frolic, no unſeemly touch
Or ſignal, that inſpires the hint impure.

ADICUS.

Why theſe are maxims obſolete and ſtale;
Worm-eaten rules, coeval with the hymns
Of old [72] Cecydas and Buphonian feaſts.

DICÆUS.

Yet ſo were train'd the heroes, that embru'd
The field of Marathon with hoſtile blood;
This diſcipline it was that brac'd their nerves
And fitted them for conqueſt. You, forſooth,
At great Minerva's feſtival produce
Your martial dancers, not as they were wont,
But ſmother'd underneath a tawdry load
Of cumbrous armour, till I ſweat to ſee them
Dangling their ſhields in ſuch unſeemly ſort
As marrs the ſacred meaſure of the dance.
Be wiſe, therefore, young man, and turn to me,
Turn to the better guide, ſo ſhall you learn

[72] Cecydas, a dithyrambic poet of very early times: Cratinus mentions him in his Panoptæ. The Buphonian feſtival, ſo called from the ſacrifice of the ox, was a very antient eſtabliſhment.

To ſcorn the noiſy forum, ſhun the bath,
And turn with bluſhes from the ſcene impure:
Then conſcious innocence ſhall make you bold
To ſpurn the injurious, but to reverend age
Meek and ſubmiſſive, riſing from your ſeat
To pay the homage due, nor ſhall you ever
Or wring the parent's ſoul, or ſtain your own.
In purity of manners you ſhall live
A bright example; vain ſhall be the lures
Of the ſtage-wanton floating in the dance,
Vain all her arts to ſnare you in her arms,
And ſtrip you of your virtue and good name.
No petulant reply ſhall you oppoſe
To fatherly commands, nor taunting vent
Irreverent mockery on his hoary head,
Crying—"Behold Iapetus himſelf!"
Poor thanks for all his fond parental care.

ADICUS.

Aye, my brave youth, do, follow theſe fine rules,
And learn by them to be as mere a ſwine,
Driveler, and dolt, as any of the ſons
Of poor [73] Hippocrates; I ſwear by Bacchus,
Folly and foul contempt ſhall be your doom.

DICÆUS.

Not ſo, but fair and freſh in youthful bloom
Amongſt our young athletics you ſhall ſhine;

[73] Teleſippus, Demophon, and Pericles, were ſons of Hippocrates, proverbial for their ſtupidity.

Not

Not in the forum loitering time away
In goſſip prattle, like our gang of idlers,
Nor yet in ſome vexatious paltry ſuit
Wrangling and quibbling in our petty courts,
But in the ſolemn academic grove,
Crown'd with the modeſt reed, fit converſe hold
With your collegiate equals; there ſerene,
Calm as the ſcene around you, underneath
The fragrant foliage where the ilex ſpreads,
Where the deciduous poplar ſtrews her leaves,
Where the tall elm-tree and wide ſtretching plane
Sigh to the fanning breeze, you ſhall inhale
Sweet odours wafted in the breath of ſpring.
This is the regimen that will inſure
A healthful body and a vigorous mind,
A countenance ſerene, expanded cheſt,
Heroic ſtature and a temperate tongue;
But take theſe modern maſters, and behold
Theſe bleſſings all revers'd; a pallid cheek,
Shrunk ſhoulders, cheſt contracted, ſapleſs limbs,
A tongue that never reſts, and mind debas'd,
By their vile ſophiſtry perverſely taught
To call good evil, evil good, and be
That thing, which nature ſpurns at, that diſeaſe,
A meer [74] Antimachus, the ſink of vice.

[74] Of this Antimachus I collect nothing more, than that he was generally marked with contempt for his effeminacy and profligacy.

[75] CHORUS.

" Oh ſage inſtructor, how ſublime
" Theſe maxims of the former time!
" How ſweet this unpolluted ſtream
" Of eloquence, how pure the theme!
" Thrice happy they, whoſe lot was caſt
" Amongſt the generation paſt,
" When virtuous morals were diſplay'd
" And theſe grave inſtitutes obey'd.
" Now you that vaunt yourſelf ſo high,
" Prepare; we wait for your reply,
" And recollect, or ere you ſtart,
" You take in hand no eaſy part;
" Well hath he ſpoke, and reaſons good
" By better only are withſtood;

[75] The poet having concluded his diſcuſſion of the antient diſcipline, in a very eloquent harangue (though perhaps out of place according to the rules of comedy, and ſomewhat of the longeſt) and being conſcious of having given all the argument to the advocate for times paſt, contrives, through the vehicle of the Chorus, to point out to the audience how their conſciences ought in moral juſtice to decide. It is in this ſcene only, that his attack upon the ſophiſts is of a grave and ſolemn caſt, in every other inſtance he combats them with the weapons of ridicule, for which the character of Strepſiades is moſt ingeniouſly contrived, and though he makes the worſe reaſoner triumph over the better, and bear away his pupil from him, yet it is a triumph gained by ſuch low and deſpicable quibbles, ſuch palpable and barefaced ſophiſtry, that the ſucceſs of the event is at once the ſevereſt ſatire he can vent upon the conqueror and his cauſe.

" Sharpen

" Sharpen your wits then, or you'll meet
" Contempt as certain as defeat."

ADICUS.

Doubt not I'm ready, full up to the throat
And well nigh choak'd with plethory of words,
Impatient to diſcharge them. I do know
The mighty maſters of the modern ſchool
Term me the lower logic, ſo diſtinguiſh'd
From the old practice of the upper time,
By him perſonified; which name of honour
I gain'd as the projector of that method,
Which can confute and puzzle all the courts
Of law and juſtice—An invention worth
Thouſands to them who practiſe it, whereas
It nonſuits all opponents.—Let that paſs.
Now take a ſample of it in the eaſe
With which I'll baffle this old vaunting pedant
With his warm baths, that he forſooth forbids.
Harkye, old man, diſcuſs, if ſo it pleaſe you,
Your excellent good reaſon for this rule,
That interdicts warm bathing.

DICÆUS.

Simply this—
I hold it a relaxer, rendering men
Effeminate and feeble.

ADICUS.

Hold awhile—
I have you on the hook. Anſwer me this—

Of all the heroes Jupiter has father'd,
Which is for ſtrength, for courage, and a courſe
Of labours, moſt renown'd?

DICÆUS.

I know none
Superior in thoſe qualities to Hercules.

ADICUS.

And who e'er heard [76] Herculean baths were cold?
Yet Hercules himſelf you own was ſtrong.

DICÆUS.

Aye, this is in the very ſtile of the times;
Theſe are the dialectics now in faſhion
With our young ſophiſts, who frequent the baths
Whilſt the palæſtra ſtarves.

ADICUS.

I grant you this;
It is the ſtile of the times, by you condemn'd,
By me approv'd, and not without good cauſe;
For how but thus doth antient Neſtor talk?
Can Homer err? Were all his wiſe men fools?
They are my witneſſes.—Now for this tongue,
This member out of uſe by his decree,
Not ſo by mine.—His ſcholar muſt be ſilent

[76] Tepid baths, according to fabulous legends, being the gift of Vulcan to Hercules, it became a faſhion to term all ſuch Herculean.

And

And chaſte withal—damping preſcriptions both—
For what good fortune ever did betide
The mute and modeſt? Inſtance me a caſe.

DICÆUS.

Many—[77] Chaſte Peleus ſo obtain'd his ſword.

ADICUS.

His ſword! And what did Peleus gain by that?
Battle and blows this modeſt Peleus gain'd,
Whilſt mean Hyperbolus, whoſe wretched craft
Was lamp-making, by craft of viler ſort
Garbel'd his thouſands, ſolid coin, not ſwords.

DICÆUS.

But continence befriended Peleus ſo
As won the goddeſs Thetis to his bed.

ADICUS.

And drove her out of it—for he was cold,
Languid and liſtleſs; ſhe was briſk and ſtirring,
And ſought the ſport elſewhere. Now are you anſwered?
Good ſooth you're in your dotage. Mark, young ſir,

[77] Peleus having withſtood the ſolicitations of Atalante, wife of Acaſtus, was rewarded for his continence, by the gods, with a ſword of celeſtial temper, the workmanſhip of Vulcan. But Atalante having accuſed him to her huſband, and ſtimulated Acaſtus to revenge a ſuppoſed attempt upon her honour, Peleus found himſelf driven to declare war againſt him, and to this Adicus alludes in his retort upon Dicæus.

Theſe are the fruits of continence; you ſee
What pleaſure you muſt forfeit to preſerve it—
All the delights that woman can beſtow;
No am'rous ſports to catch the fair one's ſmile,
No luſcious dainties ſhall you then partake,
No gay convivial revels, where the glaſs
With peals of laughter circulates around;
Theſe you muſt ſacrifice, and without theſe
What is your life?—So much for your delights.—
Now let us ſee how ſtands your ſcore with nature—
You're in ſome ſcrape we'll ſay—intrigue—adultery—
You're caught, convicted, cruſht—for what can ſave
you?
You have no powers of ſpeech—but arm'd by me
You're up to all occaſions: Nothing fear,
Ev'n give your genius ſcope; laugh, frolick, ſport,
And flout at ſhame; for ſhould the wittol ſpouſe
Detect you in the fact, you ſhall ſo poſe him
In his appeal, that nothing ſhall ſtick to you,
For Jove ſhall take the blame from off your ſhoulders,
Being himſelf a cuckold-making god,
And you a poor frail mortal—Why ſhould you
Be wiſer, ſtronger, purer than a god?

DICÆUS.

But what if this your ſcholar ſhou'd incur
The catamite's correction, pill'd and ſanded
And garniſh'd with a radiſh in his crupper,

The

The ſcoff of all beholders—What fine quirk
Will clear him at that pinch, but he muſt paſs
For a moſt perfect Ganimede?

ADICUS.

What then?

Where is the harm?

DICÆUS.

Can greater harm befal him?

ADICUS.

What will you ſay if here I can confute you?

DICÆUS.

Nothing—my ſilence ſhall confeſs your triumph.

ADICUS.

Come on then, anſwer me to what I aſk.
Our advocates—what are they?

DICÆUS.

Catamites.

ADICUS.

Our tragic poets—what are they?

DICÆUS.

The ſame.

ADICUS.

Good, very good!—our dæmagogues—

DICÆUS.

No better.

ADICUS.

See there! diſcern you not that you are foil'd?
Caſt your eyes round this company.—

DICÆUS.

I do.

ADICUS.

And what do you diſcover?

DICÆUS.

Numerous birds
Of the ſame filthy feather, ſo Heaven help me!
This man I mark; and this and this fine fop
With his coil'd locks—To all theſe I can ſwear.

ADICUS.

What ſay you then?

DICÆUS.

I ſay I am confuted—
[78] Here, wagtails, catch my cloak—I'll be amongſt you.

SOCRATES.

Now, friend, what ſay you? who ſhall ſchool your ſon?

[78] Here ends this famous epiſode, reverſing the Choice of Hercules, and making the ſpectators parties in the criminality and injuſtice of the deciſion. This ſhort ſpeech has been given in ſome copies to Phidippides, but it properly belongs to Dicæus, whoſe action of throwing off his cloak alludes to Socrates's ceremony of ſtripping his diſciples before they were initiated into his ſchool.

STREPSIADES.

School him and ſcourge him, take him to yourſelf,
And mind you whet him to an edge on both ſides,
This for ſlight ſkirmiſh, that for ſtronger work.

SOCRATES.

Doubt not, we'll finiſh him to your content
A perfect Sophiſt.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Perfect ſkin and bone—
That I can well believe.

SOCRATES.

No more—Away!

PHIDIPPIDES.

Truſt me you've made a rod for your own back.

(*Manet* CHORUS.)

Now to our candid judges we ſhall tell
What recompence they may expect from us,
If they indeed are ſtudious to deſerve it:
Firſt, on your new-ſown grounds in kindly ſhowers,
Poſtponing other calls, we will deſcend.
The bearing branches of your vines ſhall ſprout,
Nor ſcorcht with ſummer heats nor chill'd with rain.
This to our friends who ſerve us, but to him,
Who dares to ſlight us, let that mortal hear,
And tremble at the vengeance which awaits him:
Nor wine nor oil ſhall that man's farm produce;

ADICUS.

See there! diſcern you not that you are foil'd?
Caſt your eyes round this company.—

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I do.

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This to our friends who ſerve us, but to him,
Who dares to ſlight us, let that mortal hear,
And tremble at the vengeance which awaits him:
Nor wine nor oil ſhall that man's farm produce;

For when his olive trees ſhould yield their fruit,
And his ripe vineyard tempts the gatherer's hand,
We'll batter him to ruin, lay him bare;
And if we catch him with his roof until'd,
Heav'ns! how we'll drench him with a pelting ſtorm
Of hail and rain inceſſant; above all,
Let him beware upon the wedding night;
When he brings home his own or kinſman's bride,
Let him look to't! Then we'll come down in torrents,
That he ſhall rather take his chance in Egypt,
Than ſtand the vengeful ſoaking we will give him.

(STREPSIADES *alone.*)

Lo! here's the fifth day gone—the fourth—the third—
The ſecond too—day of all days to me
Moſt hateful and accurſt—the dreadful eve,
Uſhering the new moon, that lets in the tide
Of happy creditors, all ſworn againſt me,
To rack and ruin me beyond redemption.
I like a courteous debtor, who would fain
Soften their flinty boſoms, thus accoſt them—
"Ah my good ſir, this payment comes upon me
"At a bad time, excuſe me—That bill's due,
"But you'll extend the grace—This you will cancel,
"And totally acquit me."—By no means;
All with one voice cry out, they will be paid,
And I muſt be be-knav'd into the bargain,
And threaten'd with a writ to mend the matter—

Well, let it come !—They may ev'n do their worſt;
I care not ſo my ſon hath learnt the trick
Of this new rhetoric, as will appear
When I have beat this door—Boy, boy ! come forth !

(SOCRATES *comes forth.*)

SOCRATES.

Hail to Strepſiades !

STREPSIADES.

Thrice hail to Socrates !
But firſt I pray you take this dole of meal
In token of the reverence I bear you ;
And now, ſo pleaſe you, tell me of my ſon,
Your late novitiate. Comes he on apace ?

SOCRATES.

He apprehends acutely.

STREPSIADES.

Oh brave news !
Oh the tranſcendent excellence of fraud !

SOCRATES.

Yes, you may ſet your creditors at naught—

STREPSIADES.

And their avouchers too ?—

SOCRATES.

Had they a thouſand.

STREPSIADES.

Then I'll ſing out my ſong, and ſing aloud,

And

And it ſhall be—Woe, woe to all your gang,
Ye money jobbing caitiffs, uſurers, ſharks!
Hence with your regiſters, your cents-per-cent;
I fear you not; ye cannot hook me now.
Oh! ſuch a ſon have I in training for you,
Arm'd with a two-edg'd tongue that cuts o' both ſides,
The ſtay, ſupport and pillar of my houſe,
The ſcourge of my tormentors, the redeemer
Of a moſt wretched father—Call him forth,
Call him, I ſay, and let my eyes feaſt on him—
What hoa! My ſon, my boy—Your father calls;
Come forth and ſhew yourſelf.

(PHIDIPPIDES *enters.*)

SOCRATES.

Behold him preſent!

STREPSIADES.

My dear—my darling—

SOCRATES.

Lo! you have your darling.

(PHIDIPPIDES *enters.*)

STREPSIADES.

Joy, joy, my ſon! all joy—for now you wear
A face of the right character and caſt,
A wrangling, quibbling, contradicting face;
Now you have got it neatly on your tongue—
The very quirk o' th' time—"What's that you ſay?
"What is it?"—Shifting from yourſelf the wrong

To

To him that ſuffers it—an arch conceit
To make a transfer of iniquity,
When it has ſerv'd your turn—Yes, you will paſs;
You've the right Attic ſtamp upon your forehead.
Now let me ſee a ſample of your ſervice,
For ſooth to ſay you owe me a good turn.

PHIDIPPIDES.

What vexes you, my father?

STREPSIADES.

What! the moon,
This day both new and old.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Both in one day?
Ridiculous!

STREPSIADES.

No matter—'Tis the day
Will bring my creditors upon my back
All in a ſwarm together.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Let them ſwarm!
We'll ſmother 'em if they dare ſo to miſcal
One day as two days.

STREPSIADES.

What ſhould hinder them?

PHIDIPPIDES.

What, do you aſk? Can the ſame woman be
Both young and old at once?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

They ſpeak by law:
The ſtatute bears them out.

PHIDIPPIDES.

But they miſconſtrue
The ſpirit of the ſtatute.

STREPSIADES.

What is that?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Time honour'd Solon was the people's friend—

STREPSIADES.

This makes not to the caſe of new or old.

PHIDIPPIDES.

And he appointed two days for the proceſs,
The old and new day—for citation that,
This for diſcharge—

STREPSIADES.

Why did he name two days?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Why, but that one might warn men of their debts,
The other ſerve them to eſcape the payment;
Elſe were they laid by th' heels as ſure as fate
On the new moon enſuing.

STREPSIADES.

Wherefore then
Upon the former day do they commence

Their

Their doles and firſt fruits at the Prytaneum,
And not at the new moon?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Becauſe, forſooth,
They're hungry feeders, and make haſte to thruſt
Their greedy fingers in the public diſh.

STREPSIADES.

Hence then, ye witleſs creditors, begone!
We are the wiſe ones, we are the true ſort;
Ye are but blocks, mob, cattle, empty caſks—
" Therefore with ecſtacy I'll raiſe
" My jocund voice in fortune's praiſe,
" And oh rare ſon!—Oh happy me!
" The burden of my ſong ſhall be;
" For hark! each paſſing neighbour cries—
" All hail, Strepſiades the wiſe!
" Acroſs the forum as I walk,
" I and my ſon the public talk,
" All ſtriving which ſhall have to boaſt
" He prais'd me firſt, or prais'd me moſt—
" And now, my ſon, my welcome gueſt,
" Enter my houſe and grace my feaſt." (*Exeunt.*)

(PASIAS *and a* WITNESS.)

PASIAS.

Should this man be permitted to go on
At ſuch a deſperate rate? It muſt not be.
Better for him to have brok'n up at once

Than

Than to be thus beſet. Therefore it is
That I am forc'd upon this hoſtile courſe,
Empowering you to ſummon this my debtor
For the recovery of my own—Good ſooth,
I will not put my country to the bluſh,
But I muſt rouſe Strepſiades—

(STREPSIADES *re-enters.*)

STREPSIADES.

Who's this?

PASIAS.

The old and new day calls upon you, ſir.

STREPSIADES.

Bear witneſs that this man has nam'd two days—
And for what debt do you aſſail me thus?

PASIAS.

For twelve good pounds that you took up at intereſt
To pay for your ſon's racer.

STREPSIADES.

I a racer?
Do you not hear him? Can you not all witneſs
How mortally and from my ſoul I hate
All the whole racing calendar?

PASIAS.

What then?
You took the gods to witneſs you would pay me.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

I grant you, in my folly I did ſwear,
But then my ſon had not attain'd the art
Of the new logic unconfutable.

PASIAS.

And have you now the face to ſtand it out
Againſt all evidence?

STREPSIADES.

Aſſuredly—
Elſe how am I the better for my ſchooling?

PASIAS.

And dare you, knowing it to be a falſehood,
Take the great gods to witneſs to your oath,
When I ſhall put it to you?

STREPSIADES.

What great gods?

PASIAS.

Mercurius, Neptune, Jupiter himſelf—

STREPSIADES.

Yes, and ſtake down three farthings as a handſel
That I will take the oath, ſo help me Jove!

PASIAS.

Inſolent wretch, you'll periſh in your folly.

STREPSIADES.

Oh! that this madman was well ſcrub'd with ſalt
To ſave his brains from addling!

PASIAS.

Out upon't!
Do you make game of me?

STREPSIADES.

—I warrant me
He'll take at leaſt ſix gallons for a dreſſing.

PASIAS.

So may great Jove and all the gods deal with me
As I will handle you for this buffoonery!

STREPSIADES.

I thank you for your gods—They're pleaſant fellows—
And for your Jupiter, the learn'd and wiſe
[79] Hold him a very ſilly thing to ſwear by.

PASIAS.

'Tis well, raſh man, 'tis well! The time will come

[79] The exultation of Strepſiades upon receiving his ſon out of the hands of Socrates, the confidence with which he now faces creditors, of late ſo much dreaded, and the daring contempt he avows for Jupiter and the gods, are given with great comic ſpirit, and in the boldeſt ſtrain of ſatire, through the whole of this and the preceding ſcenes. The pretences he ſets up for parrying the lawful demands of his creditors are ſo ſtrictly deducible from the lectures he had received from the philoſopher, that every thing either ſaid or done by father and ſon is by the cunning of the poet contrived to ſpring ſo pointedly and preciſely from the dictates of their maſter, that nothing is allowed to eſcape, for which he is not made reſponſible, whilſt the ſchool of Socrates is held up to the audience as the ſource of every ſpecies of fraud, injuſtice, and impiety; and all this is done with a ſubtlety, that only makes the aim more certain and the ſtroke more ſevere.

When

When you ſhall wiſh theſe vaunting words unſaid.
But will you pay the debt or will you not?
Say, and diſmiſs me.

STREPSIADES.

Set your mind at reſt;
You ſhall have ſatisfaction in a twinkling—
(*Steps aſide.*)

PASIAS.

What think you of this chap?

WITNESS.

That he will pay you.

(STREPSIADES *returns.*)

STREPSIADES.

Where is this dun of mine? Come hither, friend,
How do you call this thing?

PASIAS.

A kneading trough,
Or as we ſay, a cardopus—

STREPSIADES.

Go to!
Doſt think I'll pay my money to a blockhead,
That calls this kneading-trough a *cardopus?*
I tell you, man, it is a *cardopa*—
Go, go, you will not get a doit from me,
You and your *cardopus.*

PASIAS.

Will you not pay me?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Aſſure yourſelf I will not—Hence, begone!
Will you not beat your march, and quit my doors?

PASIAS.

I'm gone, but take this with you, if I live
I'll ſue you in the Prytaneum before night.

STREPSIADES.

You'll loſe your ſuit, and your twelve pounds beſides.
I'm ſorry for your loſs, but who can help it?
You may ev'n thank your cardopus for that.

*(Exit* PASIAS *and* WITNESS.*)*

(AMYNIAS *enters followed by a* WITNESS.)

AMYNIAS.

Ah me, ah me!

STREPSIADES.

Who's that with his—Ah me?
Whom has [80] *Carcinus* ſent amongſt us now—
Which of his doleful deities?—

AMYNIAS.

Alas!
Would you know who I am? Know then I am
A wretch made up of woes—

[80] He glances at Carcinus, a very voluminous tragic writer, to the amount of 160 dramas. He introduced ſome of the immortals in ridiculous ſituations, uſing the like doleful expreſſions as he puts here in the mouth of the money lender.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

A woeful wretch—

Granted! paſs on.

AMYNIAS.

Oh inauſpicious chance!

Oh ye hard hearted, chariot breaking fates!
Oh! Pallas my deſtroyer, what a craſh
Is this that you have giv'n me!

STREPSIADES.

Hah! what ails you?
Of what can you accuſe [81] Tlepolemus?

AMYNIAS.

Mock not my miſeries, but bid your ſon
Repay what he has borrow'd.

STREPSIADES.

Take me with you—
What ſhould my ſon repay?

AMYNIAS.

The ſum I lent him.

STREPSIADES.

Is that it? Then your caſe is deſperate;
Truly you're out of luck.

[81] This is a parody upon ſome paſſage in one of Carcinus's tragedies, or of his ſon Xenocles, in which Tlepolemus was probably the hero of the fable.

AMYNIAS.

AMYNIAS.

I'm out of every thing—
I overthrew my chariot—By the gods
That's being *out*, I take it, with a vengeance.

STREPSIADES.

Say rather you are kick'd by an [82] aſs—a trifle!

AMYNIAS.

But, ſir, my lawful money is no trifle;
I ſhall not chuſe to be kickt out of that.

STREPSIADES.

I'll tell you what you are—Out of your wits.

AMYNIAS.

How ſo?

STREPSIADES.

Becauſe your brain ſeems wondrous leaky.

AMYNIAS.

Look to't! By Mercury, I'll clap you up
If you don't pay me.

STREPSIADES.

Hark'ye, one ſhort queſtion—
When Jove rains on us does he rain freſh water,
Or only vapours that the ſun exhales?
Anſwer me that.

[82] There is a play upon words in the original, which is not poſſible to transfuſe into the tranſlation. The learned reader will underſtand the difficulty.

AMYNIAS.

AMYNIAS.

I care not what he rains;
I trouble not my cap with ſuch conceits.

STREPSIADES.

And do you think a man, that has no wit
To argue theſe rare points, will argue me
Out of my money?

AMYNIAS.

Let your debt go on,
And pay me up the intereſt.

STREPSIADES.

What is that?
What kind of thing is that ſame intereſt?

AMYNIAS.

A thing it is that grows from day to day,
And month to month, ſwelling as time rolls on
To a round ſum of money.

STREPSIADES.

Well defin'd!
One queſtion more—What think you of the ſea?
Is it not fuller now than heretofore?

AMYNIAS.

No, by the Gods! not fuller, but as full:
That is my judgment of it.

STREPSIADES.

Oh thou miſer!
That ſo would'ſt ſtint the ocean, and yet cram
Thy ſwelling coffers till they overflow—
Fetch me a whip, that I may laſh him hence:
Take to your heels—begone!

AMYNIAS.

I will convoke
My witneſſes againſt you.

STREPSIADES.

Start! ſet off!—
Do you take reſt?—away!

AMYNIAS.

Is not this outrage?

STREPSIADES.

Will you not bolt; will you not buckle kindly
Into your geers, or muſt I mount and goad you
Under the crupper till you kick and wince
For very madneſs? Oho! Are you off?
A welcome riddance—All the devils drive
You and your curſed chariot hence together.

*(Exeunt.)*

*Manet* CHORUS.

" Mark here how rarely it ſucceeds
" To build our truſt on guilty deeds:
" Mark how this old cajoling elf,
" Who ſets a trap to catch himſelf,

" Falſe

" Falſely believes he has found the way
" To hold his creditors at bay.
" Too late he'll curſe the ſophiſts' ſchool,
" That taught his ſon to cheat by rule,
" And train'd the modeſt lips of youth
" In the vile art of torturing truth;
" A modern logic much in uſe,
" Invented for the law's abuſe;
" A ſubtle knack of ſpying flaws
" To caſt in doubt the cleareſt cauſe,
" Whereby, in honeſty's deſpight,
" The wrong ſide triumphs o'er the right—
" Alas! ſhort triumph he muſt have,
" Who glories that his ſon's a knave:
" [83] Ah fooliſh ſire, the time will come
" You'll wiſh that ſon of your's were dumb."

STREPSIADES, PHIDIPPIDES, CHORUS.

STREPSIADES.

Hoa there! What hoa! for pity's ſake ſome help!

[83] The moral and prophetic Chorus again denounces puniſhment and repentance upon the infamous expedients which this old fellow has reſorted to for defrauding his creditors, and the ſucceeding incident fully verifies the prediction. I am fully perſuaded there is no Greek drama now in our hands, where the Chorus takes a part ſo intimately connected with the plot, as in this comedy: here it is eſſential, and delivers thoſe ſentiments, which reaſon dictates, and the poet wiſhes to inſpire into the minds of his hearers——

*Oh! ſi ſic ſemper dixiſſet!*

Friends, kinſmen, countrymen! turn out and help!
Oh! my poor head, my cheeks are bruis'd to jelly—
Help by all means!—Why, thou ungracious cub,
Thy father woud'ſt thou beat?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Aſſuredly.

STREPSIADES.

There, there! He owns that he would beat his father.

PHIDIPPIDES.

I own it, good my father!

STREPSIADES.

Parricide!
Impious aſſaſſin! Sacrilegious wretch!

PHIDIPPIDES.

All, all, and more—You cannot pleaſe me better;
I glory in theſe attributes. Go on!

STREPSIADES.

Monſter of turpitude!

PHIDIPPIDES.

Crown me with roſes!

STREPSIADES.

Wretch, will you ſtrike your parent?

PHIDIPPIDES.

Piouſly,
And will maintain the right, by which I do it.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Oh ſhameleſs villain! can there be a right
Againſt all nature ſo to treat a father?

PHIDIPPIDES.

That I ſhall ſoon make clear to your conviction.

STREPSIADES.

You, you convince me!

PHIDIPPIDES.

With the greateſt eaſe:
And I can work the proof two ſeveral ways;
Therefore make choice between them.

STREPSIADES.

What do you mean?

PHIDIPPIDES.

I mean to ſay we argue up or down—
Take which you like. It comes to the ſame end.

STREPSIADES.

Aye, and a precious end you've brought it to,
If all my care of you muſt end in this,
That I have put you in the way to beat me,
(Which is a thing unnatural and profane)
[84] And after juſtify it.

PHIDIPPIDES.

[84] It is not eaſy to conceive any incident more pointedly ſevere than this, which the poet has employed for intereſting the ſpectators in his attack upon the ſophiſts. A ſon exhibited in the im-

PHIDIPPIDES.

That I'll do
By proceſs clear and categorical,
That you ſhall fairly own yourſelf a convert
To a moſt wholeſome cudgelling.

STREPSIADES.

Come on!
Give me your arguments—but ſpare your blows.

[85] CHORUS.

How to reſtrain this headſtrong ſon of your's
Behoves you now, old man, to find the means,
For ſure he could not be thus confident
Without ſome cauſe; ſomething there needs muſt be,
Some ſtrong poſſeſſion of himſelf within,
That buoys him up to this high pitch of daring,
This bold aſſumption; which that we may know,
Give us diſtinctively the whole detail
From firſt to laſt whence this contention ſprung,
So ſhall we hear, and hearing judge betwixt you.

pious act of ſtriking his father, and juſtifying the crime upon principle, is ſurely as bitter an invective againſt the ſchools of the philoſophers as can be deviſed.

[85] The interpoſition of the Chorus in this place is peculiarly appoſite, inaſmuch as it draws out the relation of what had paſſed between the father and ſon, which neither of them could elſe have given, and which it is, however, important for the audience to hear.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

So pleaſe you then I will the cauſe unfold
Of this baſe treatment to your patient ears,
And thus it ſtands—When we had ſup'd together,
As you all know, in friendly ſort, I bade him
Take up his lute and give me the good ſong
[86] Of old Simonides, who ſhear'd his ram;
But he directly ſcouted my requeſt—
It was a faſhion out of date forſooth—
He would not ſit twanging the lute, not he;
'Twas not for him to cackle o'er his wine,
[87] As if he were ſome wench working the hand-mill—
'Twas vulgar and unſeemly—

PHIDIPPIDES.

Groſsly ſo;
And was it not high time that I ſhould beat you,
Who had no better manners than to ſet
Your gueſt a chirping like a graſshopper?

STREPSIADES.

Theſe were his very words, and more than theſe;
For by and bye he told me that Simonides
Was a moſt paltry poet. This you'll own

[86] Some popular ballad of Simonides the lyric poet, of which I can diſcover no other record.

[87] The women, whilſt at work upon the hand mill, were in the cuſtom of cheering their labour with a ſong, and theſe ballads were thence called Επιμύλιοι ὠδαι.

Was a tough morſel, yet I gulp'd it down,
And paſs'd it off with bidding him recite
Some paſſage out of Æſchylus, withal
Tendering a myrtle wreath, as cuſtom is,
To grace the recitation—He forſooth,
Flouting my tender, inſtantly replied—
" I hold your Æſchylus, of all our poets,
" Firſt of the ſpouters, incoherent, harſh,
" Precipitous and turgid."—Oh my friends,
Was not this more than fleſh and blood ſhould bear?
Yet, yet I ſmother'd rage within my heart
And calmly ſaid—" Call ſomething elſe to mind
" More to your taſte and from ſome modern bard,
" So it be good withal and worth the hearing—"
Whereat, would you believe it? he began
Repeating from Euripides—Great Jove,
Guard my chaſte ears from ſuch another doſe!
A perilous long-winded tale of inceſt
[88] 'Twixt ſon and daughter of the ſame ſad mother.
Sick to the ſoul I ſpurn'd at ſuch declaming,
Adding, as well I might, all that my ſcorn
Of ſuch vile traſh could add; till, to be ſhort,
Words begat words, and blows too as it prov'd,

[88] Euripides formed a tragedy on the ſtory of Macareus the ſon of Æolus, who violated his uterine ſiſter Canace, for which crime he was put to death by his father. To this drama Ovid alludes in his Tr. 11. 384.——*Nobilis eſt Canace fratris amore ſui.* (*Brunck.*)

For

For leaping from his ſeat he ſprung upon me,
Struck, buffetted, and bang'd me out of meaſure,
Throttled me, pounded me well nigh to duſt—

PHIDIPPIDES.

And what leſs does that heretic deſerve,
Who will not praiſe Euripides, the firſt
In wiſdom of all poets?

STREPSIADES.

He the firſt!
How my tongue itches!—but the rogue is ready;
He'll beat me if I anſwer.

PHIDIPPIDES.

And with reaſon.

STREPSIADES.

What reaſon, graceleſs cub, will bear you out
For beating me, who in your baby age
Careſs'd you, dandled you upon my knee,
Watch'd every motion, humour'd all your wants?
Then if you liſp'd a ſyllable I caught it—
*Bryn* cried the bantling—ſtrait I gave you drink:
[89] *Mamman* it mew'd—and that forſooth was bread:
Nay, I perform'd the nurſe's dirtieſt taſk,
And held you out before me at your needs;
And now in my neceſſity you ſhow'd
No mercy to the preſſing calls of nature,

[89] *Bryn, Mamman,* words of the nurſery.

But having pummell'd me till my poor bowels
Could hold no longer, kept me faſt impriſon'd
To ſtruggle with occaſion as I could.

CHORUS.

Now every young man's heart beats an alarm,
Anxious to hear his advocate's appeal;
Which if he can eſtabliſh, the ſame right
By him aſſerted will on all devolve,
And beating then will be ſo much in vogue
That old men's ſkins will be reduc'd to cobwebs—
Now you, that hold up this new paradox,
Look well how you defend it, for it aſks
No trivial reaſons to enforce perſuaſion.

PHIDIPPIDES.

How gratefully the mind receives new lights,
Emerging from the ſhades of prejudice,
And caſting old eſtabliſhments aſide!
Time was but now, when every thought of mine
Was center'd in the ſtable; then I had not
Three words upon my tongue without a ſtumble;
But now, ſince I've been put into the way
Of knowing better things, and the fine art
Of ſubtile diſputation, I am bold
To meet this queſtion, and convince my hearers
How right it is to puniſh this old ſinner.

STREPSIADES.

Mount, mount your chariot! Oh, that I could ſee you
Seated

Seated again behind your favourite horſes,
Tho' 'twere with four in hand, ſo that you kept
From driving me at ſuch a pelting rate.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Now then I aſk you, gathering up my thread
Where it was broken off, if you, my father,
When I was but a ſtripling, ſpar'd my back?

STREPSIADES.

No, for I ſtudied all things for your good,
And therefore I corrected you.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Agreed.
I alſo am like ſtudious of your good,
And therefore I moſt lovingly correct you;
If beating be a proof of love you have it
Plenteous in meaſure, for by what exemption
Is your moſt ſacred carcaſe freed from ſtripes
And mine made ſubject to them? Am not I
Free born as you? Say, if the ſon's in tears,
Should not the father weep?

STREPSIADES.

By what one rule
Of equity?

PHIDIPPIDES.

What equity were that
If none but children are to be chaſtis'd?

And grant they were, the proverb's in your teeth,
Which ſays old age is but a ſecond childhood.
Again, if tears are ſeen to follow blows,
Ought not old men to expiate faults with tears
Rather than children, who have more to plead
In favour of their failings?

STREPSIADES.

Where's the law
That warrants this proceeding? There's none ſuch.

PHIDIPPIDES.

And what was your lawmaker but a man,
Mortal as you and I are? And tho' time
Has ſanctified his ſtatutes, may not I
Take up the cauſe of youth, as he of age,
And publiſh a new ordinance for leave
By the right filial to correct our fathers,
Remitting and conſigning to oblivion
All ex-poſt-facto beating? Look at inſtinct—
Enquire of nature how the brute creation
Kick at their parents, which in nothing differ
From lordly man, except that they compile
No laws, and hold their rights without a ſtatute.

STREPSIADES.

If you are thus for pecking at your father
Like a young fighting-cock, why don't you peck
Your dinner from the dunghil, and at night
Rooſt on a perch?

PHIDIPPIDES.

PHIDIPPIDES.

The caſes do not tally,
Nor does my maſter Socrates preſcribe
Rules ſo abſurd.

STREPSIADES.

Ceaſe then from beating me;
Elſe you preclude yourſelf.

PHIDIPPIDES.

As how preclude?

STREPSIADES.

Becauſe the right I have of beating you
Will be your right in time over your ſon,
When you ſhall have one.

PHIDIPPIDES.

But if I have none,
All my ſad hours are loſt, and you die laughing.

STREPSIADES.

There's no denying that.—How ſay you, ſirs?
Methinks there is good matter in his plea;
And as for us old ſinners, truth to ſay,
If we deſerve a beating we muſt bear it.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Hear me—there's more to come—

STREPSIADES.

Then I am loſt,
For I can bear no more.

PHIDIPPIDES.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Oh fear it not,
Rather believe what I have now to tell you
Will cauſe you to make light of what is paſt,
'Twill bring ſuch comfort to you.

STREPSIADES.

Let me have it:
If it be comfort, give it me.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Then know,
Henceforth I am reſolv'd to beat my mother
As I have beaten you.

STREPSIADES.

How ſay you? How?
Why this were to out-do all you have done.

PHIDIPPIDES.

But what if I have got a proof in petto
To ſhew the moral uſes of this beating?

STREPSIADES.

Shew me a proof that you have hang'd yourſelf,
And with your tutor Socrates beſide you
Gone to the devil together in a ſtring,
Thoſe moral uſes I will thank you for—
Oh inauſpicious goddeſſes, O Clouds!
In you confiding all theſe woes fall on me.

CHORUS

CHORUS.

Evil events from evil cauſes ſpring,
And what you ſuffer flows from what you've done.

STREPSIADES.

Why was I not forewarn'd? You ſaw me old,
And practis'd on my weak ſimplicity.

CHORUS.

Tis not for us to warn a wilful ſinner;
We ſtay him not, but let him run his courſe,
Till by misfortunes rous'd, his conſcience wakes,
And prompts him to appeaſe th' offended gods.

STREPSIADES.

[90] I feel my ſorrows, but I own them juſt:
Yes, ye reforming Clouds, I'm duly puniſh'd
For my intended fraud.—And now, my ſon,
Join hands with me and let us forth together
To wreak our vengeance on thoſe baſe deceivers,
That Chærephon and Socrates the chief,
Who have cajol'd us both.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Grace forbid
I ſhould lift up my hand againſt my maſters.

[90] This appeal to the Chorus, their reply to it, and the old man's acknowledgment that he merited the puniſhment he met with, are finely introduced, and impreſs a very juſt and natural moral on the cataſtrophe of the fable.

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Nay, nay, but rather dread avenging Jove,
God of your anceſtors, and him revere.

PHIDIPPIDES.

You're mad, methinks, to talk to me of Jove—
Is there a god ſo call'd?

STREPSIADES.

There is! there is!

PHIDIPPIDES.

There is no Jupiter I tell you ſo;
Vortex has whirl'd him from his throne, and reigns
By right of conqueſt in the thunderer's place.

STREPSIADES.

Tis falſe, no Vortex whirls but in my brain
When in my ecſtacy I fancied you
An earthen deity, a farthing god.

PHIDIPPIDES.

Laugh at your own dull joke and be a fool!

STREPSIADES.

Inſufferable blockhead that I was;
What ail'd me thus to court this Socrates,
Ev'n to the excluſion of the immortal gods?
O Mercury, forgive me; be not angry,
Dear tutelary god, but ſpare me ſtill,
And caſt a pitying eye upon my follies,
For I have been intemperate of tongue,

And

And dearly rue it—Oh my better genius,
Inſpire me with thy counſel how to act,
Whether by legal proceſs to aſſail them,
Or by ſuch apter means as thou may'ſt dictate.
I have it! Well haſt thou inſpir'd the thought;
Hence with the lazy law; thou art not for it.
With fire and faggot I will fall upon them,
And ſend their ſchool *in fumo* to the Clouds.
Hoa, Zanthias, hoa! bring forth without delay
Your ladder and your mattock, mount the roof,
Break up the rafters, whelm the houſe upon them,
And bury the whole hive beneath the ruins.
Haſte! if you love me haſte! Oh, for a torch,
A blazing torch new lighted, to ſet fire
To the infernal edifice.—I warrant me
I'll ſoon unhouſe the raſcals, that now carry
Their heads ſo high, and roll them in the duſt.

*(The School is attacked, and the Diſciples run out)*

FIRST DISCIPLE.

Fire! Fire!

STREPSIADES.

If fire is what you want, 'tis here;
Torch, play your part, and you'll have fire enough.

FIRST DISCIPLE.

What are you doing, fellow?

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Chopping logic;
Arguing a knotty point with your houſe beams.

SECOND DISCIPLE.

Oh horror! Who has ſet our houſe on fire?

STREPSIADES.

The very man whoſe cloak you nabb'd ſo neatly.

SECOND DISCIPLE.

Undone and ruin'd—!

STREPSIADES.

Heartily I wiſh it—
And mean you ſhou'd ſo be if this ſame mattock
Does not deceive my hopes, and I eſcape
With a whole neck.

(SOCRATES *comes forth.*)

SOCRATES.

Hoa there! What man is that?
You there upon the roof—What are you doing?

STREPSIADES.

*Treading on air—contemplating the ſun—*

SOCRATES.

Ah me! I'm ſuffocated, ſmother'd, loſt—

(CHÆREPHON *appears*)

CHÆREPHON.

Wretch that I am, I'm melted, ſcorch'd, conſum'd!—

STREPSIADES.

STREPSIADES.

Blaſphemers, why did you inſult the gods?
Daſh, drive, demoliſh them! Their crimes are many,
But their contemptuous treatment of the gods,
Their impious blaſphemies, exceed them all.

CHORUS.

Break up!—The Chorus have fulfill'd their part.

END OF THE COMEDY.

# GENERAL NOTE.

I HAVE now compleated my undertaking, and preſent to my readers the comedy of the Clouds entire. Conſcious that every original muſt ſuffer by tranſlation, I have only to requeſt allowances may be made for my author, as well as for myſelf; ſtill I preſume to hope I have caught enough of his ſpirit, ſtile, and meaning, to add ſomething to the reputation of theſe Eſſays, without taking from that of the author of this celebrated drama. Let us for a moment aſſume what the poet lays down as the moral of his comedy, viz. that the doctrines of the ſophiſts were pernicious to ſociety, and the ſcheme here adopted for rendering them both ridiculous and deteſtable, will, I truſt, be acknowledged moſt appoſite and moſt excellent: Let us ſuſpend for a while our enthuſiaſm for Socrates, and we cannot withhold our praiſe from Ariſtophanes.

It was not the practice of the writers of the old and perſonal comedy, to be ſtrictly regular in the conduct

or

or conſtruction of their fables; yet in this drama, if we except his addreſs to the ſpectators, and, perhaps, his ſcene between the juſt and unjuſt declaimer (which is, in ſome degree, though not altogether, epiſodical) we find our poet ſtrictly adhering to all the beſt rules of compoſition. His plot, ſimple, clear, and ſufficiently intereſting, opens upon the audience in a very maſterly and ſtriking ſtile, is wrought up and ſupported by a variety of comic incidents through the middle ſcenes, and in the cataſtrophe cloſes with great ſpirit and ſtrict poetical juſtice, adminiſtered to the ſeveral characters which it employs. Of theſe, Strepſiades is the moſt prominent; a character ingeniouſly contrived to reflect the greateſt poſſible ridicule upon the pedantry and chicanery of the ſophiſts, by the comic contraſt of his whimſical ruſticity. A father, oppreſſed by debts and expences brought upon him by an extravagant and thoughtleſs ſon, flies to any reſources, however evil, for extricating himſelf from his embarraſſments; theſe reſources he fancies he has diſcovered in the ſchool of Socrates and Chærephon, and that ſchool (how juſtly is not now the queſtion) is put forward by the poet, and ſelected for the purpoſe of concentrating his attack to ſome determined point; he wages war againſt the ſophiſts in general, but conſidering this famous ſchool as their citadel, and its great maſter Socrates as their general, he manfully aſſails him, reſerving Chærephon to the laſt ſcene only, in which he momentarily appears,

pears, but exhibiting Socrates perſonally upon the ſtage through the whole progreſs of the play.

It is true that the charge, upon which he was condemned many years after, is here ſtrongly urged againſt him; and Strepſiades, who had been betrayed into a contemptuous diſavowal of Jupiter and the gods, by the arguments of Socrates, makes a ſolemn recantation of his errors, charging them upon the philoſopher; but in the very inſtant whilſt he is debating within himſelf—

*Whether by legal proceſs to aſſail them—*

He peremptorily rejects the idea, and proceeds to wreak his vengeance upon the ſchool in a manner perfectly ludicrous, and evidently contrived for mere farcical effect. Had the life of the philoſopher been his aim, could we ſuppoſe him a party in the cabal of Anytus and Melitus, here would have been an opportity for laying the foundation of a *legal proceſs*, which, on the contrary, he altogether puts aſide, and batters him with mere ſtage artillery—*telum imbelle, ſine ictu.*

The fact evidently appears, that as for Jupiter and the popular gods, Ariſtophanes cares as little for them, as he ſuppoſes the philoſopher to do. The tragic poets, indeed, treated them with reſpect, becauſe it was for their purpoſe to uphold them; in their ſolemn ſubjects, eſpecially of the Homeric caſt, every thing moves at the will and diſpoſition of the immortal deities; but the comic authors ſeem to have ſpared the gods as little

as they did mankind; and it is not in this comedy alone, but in every other now remaining, that we find Ariſtophanes treating them with the moſt undiſguiſed and daring contempt. To the deities of Socrates, who form the chorus in this play, he has been infinitely more gracious, having aſſigned to them a part highly honourable for its morality, and replete with ſentiments both intereſting and inſtructive. Had he been a true believer, he would never have invented blaſphemies for Strepſiades ſo pointedly of his own ſuggeſtion, but would either have retailed them from Socrates in his very words, or marked them with the ſtrongeſt abhorrence upon their delivery, whereas, on the contrary, he ſeems to hug the occaſion for inſulting them, and enjoys the jeſt of his own making.

And now, if the Engliſh reader can find amuſement in the peruſal of this tranſlated comedy, I have gained one principal object in the undertaking; but I am bold enough to hope the learned reader will be at the trouble of comparing it with the original, to which I flatter myſelf he will find it as cloſe as the languages can approximate. I believe no tranſlation from the Latin can, in the nature of things, be ſo near. I have only to add, that in the progreſs of the work, which has been long in hand, I made ſuit to many learned men for the aſſiſtance of their remarks, but obtained not one word in anſwer from any one of them, but civil apologies for declining my requeſt; I therefore ſtand reſponſible for

for the whole, and ſhall candidly and thankfully attend to any true and liberal criticiſms, which the private readers, or public reviewers of this tranſlation, ſhall be pleaſed to honour it with.

*Richard Cumberland.*

October 20th, 1797.

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